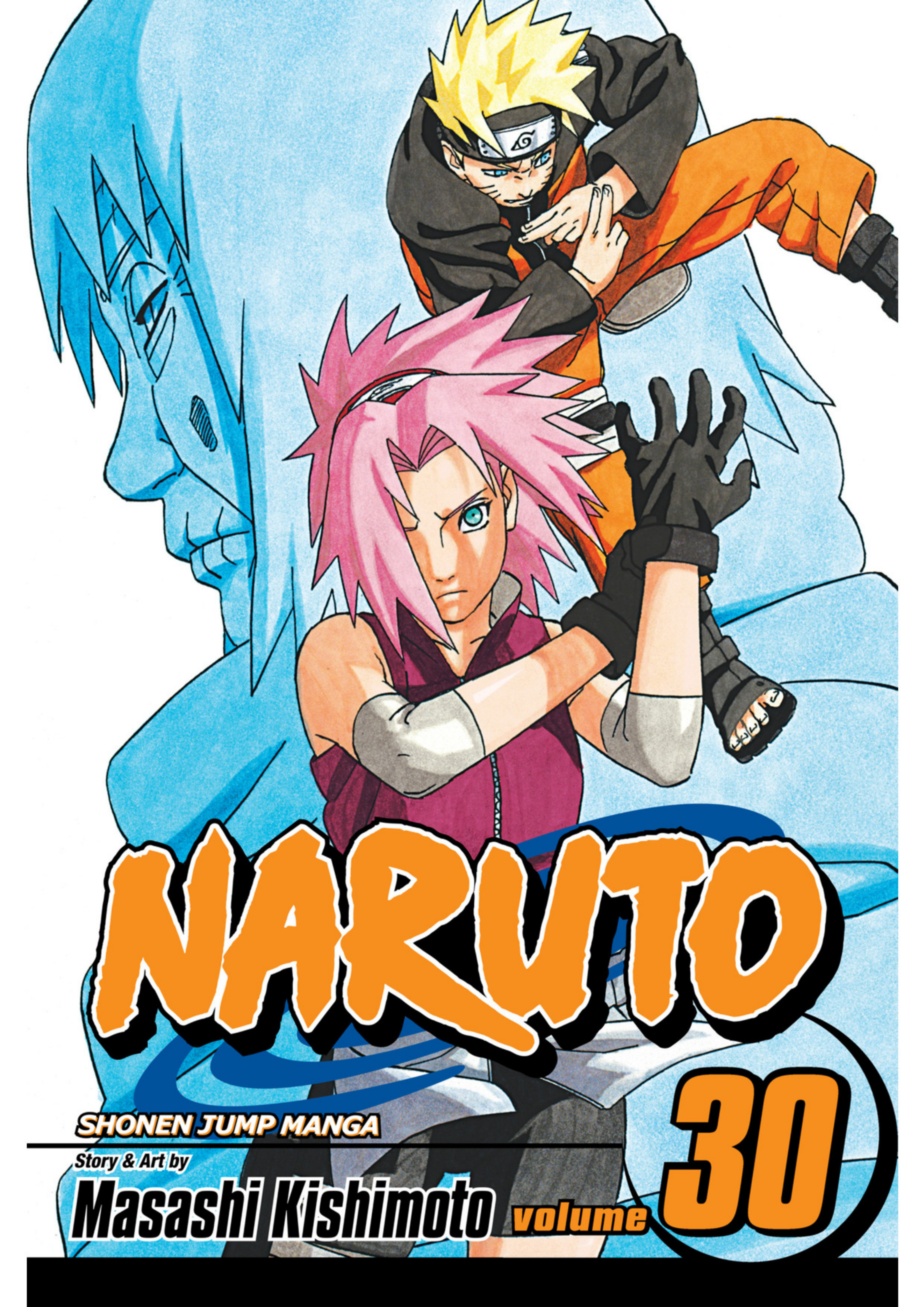
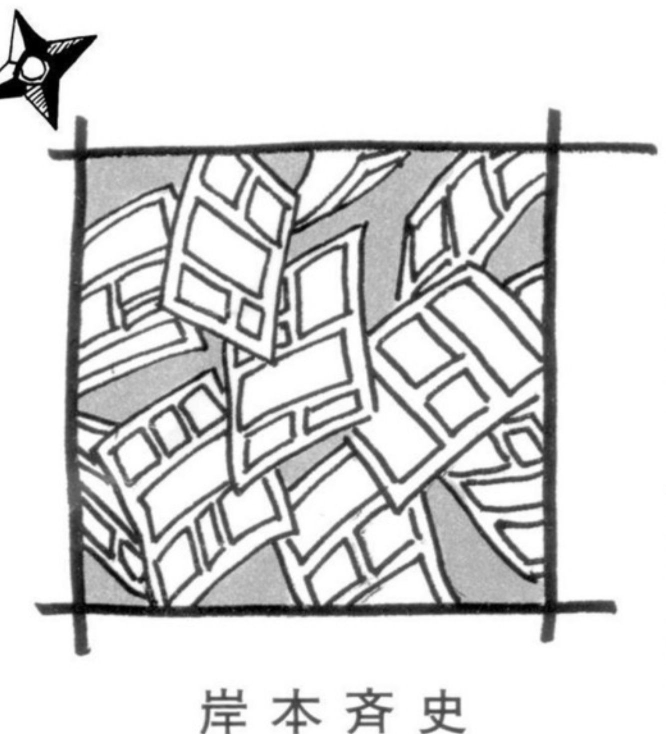

NARUTO
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Story & Art by
Masashi Kishimoto
volume
30



岸本斉史

The movies and games coming out these days look so incredible it stuns me. I'm starting to suspect my readers are so used to rich imagery that manga must feel rather underwhelming by comparison. After all, it's still published in black and white... Remember, though, that manga's strength is in its rapid production. So please overlook its weaknesses.

—Masashi Kishimoto, 2005

Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** (Mechanism). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.

NARUTO VOL. 30
The SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition

This graphic novel contains material that was originally published in English in **SHONEN JUMP** #65-66. Artwork in the magazine may have been slightly altered from that presented here.

STORY AND ART BY MASASHI KISHIMOTO

Translation & English Adaptation/Naomi Kokubo & Eric-Jon Rössel Waugh
Touch-up Art & Lettering/Gia Cam Luc
Design/Sean Lee
Editor/Joel Enos

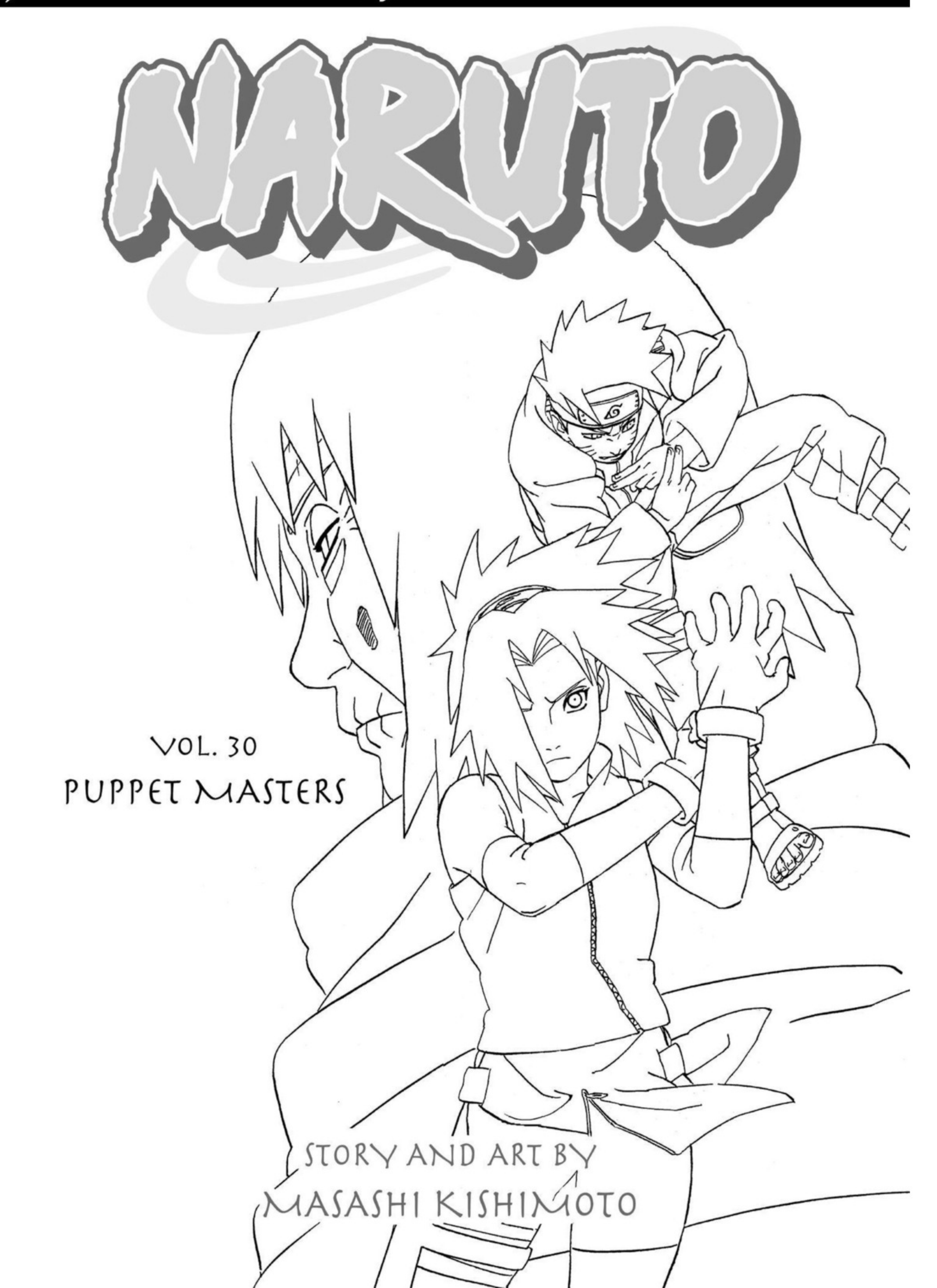
Editor in Chief, Books/Alvin Lu
Editor in Chief, Magazines/Marc Weidenbaum
VP of Publishing Licensing/Rika Inouye
VP of Sales/Gonzalo Ferreyra
Sr. VP of Marketing/Liza Coppola
Publisher/Hyoe Narita

Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, July 2008

SHONEN JUMP MANGA EDITION















The Story So Far...

Naruto was once the bane of the Konohagakure Ninja Academy. Despite the rough start, he successfully joins the ranks of ninja along with Sasuke and Sakura. During the Chûnin Exam, Orochimaru launches *Operation Destroy Konoha,* an attack thwarted by the Third Hokage's sacrifice of his own life. After the battle, Tsunade steps up to become the Fifth Hokage. Lured by Orochimaru's power, Sasuke leaves Konoha in the company of the Sound Ninja Four. Naruto confronts Sasuke, but no matter how hard he fights, he can't stop his friend.

More than two years pass. Naruto and his friends mature, each undergoing rigorous training. Gaara, who has become Kazekage, is suddenly kidnapped by the dark Akatsuki organization. Naruto and the gang set out for the Akatsuki hideaway on their way to rescue Gaara.





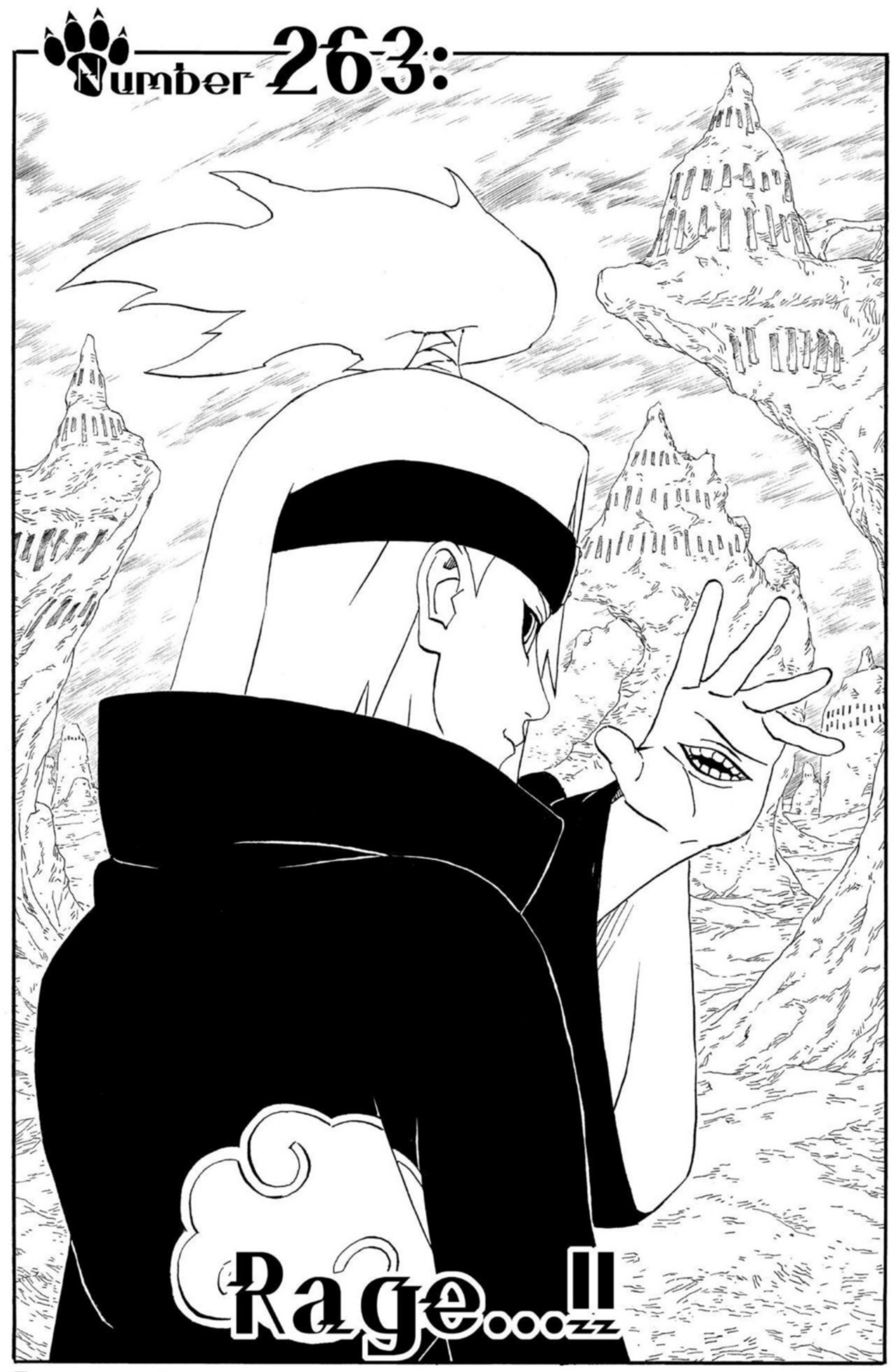
NARUTO

VOL. 30
PUPPET MASTERS

CONTENTS



NUMBER 263: RAGE...!!	7
NUMBER 264: SASORI'S MASTERPIECE...!!	27
NUMBER 265: GRANNY CHIYO & SAKURA	47
NUMBER 266: SASORI REVEALED...!!	67
NUMBER 267: FIERCE DETERMINATION...!!	87
NUMBER 268: PUPPET MASTERS!!	107
NUMBER 269: WHAT CAN I DO...?!	127
NUMBER 270: MISCALCULATION...!!	147
NUMBER 271: UNKNOWN POWER...!!	169


Number 263:
Rage...!!

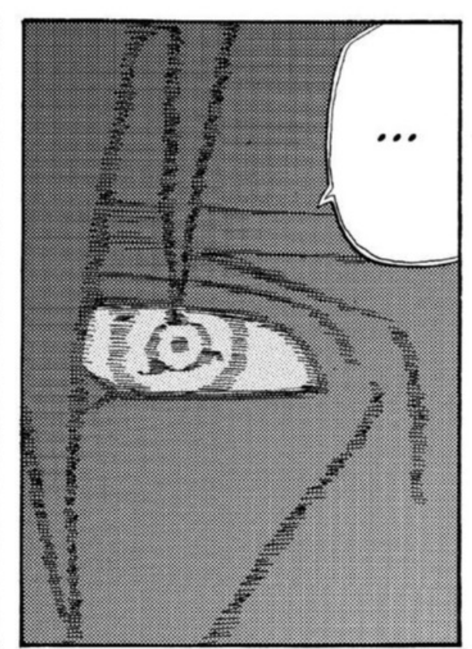

SASORI, DEIDARA... SEE TO OUR GUESTS. THEY'RE YOURS...
...EXCEPT FOR THE JINCHÛRIKI HOST. BRING HIM TO ME ALIVE.
THE REST OF YOU ARE DONE HERE.


ITACHI.
ABOUT THE JINCHÛ-RIKI...
WHAT KIND OF HOST IS THIS NARUTO?


...


TELL THEM.

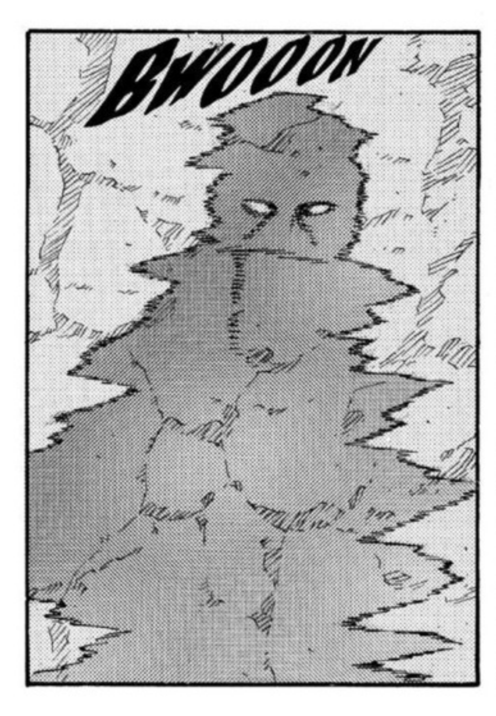

READ
THIS
WAY

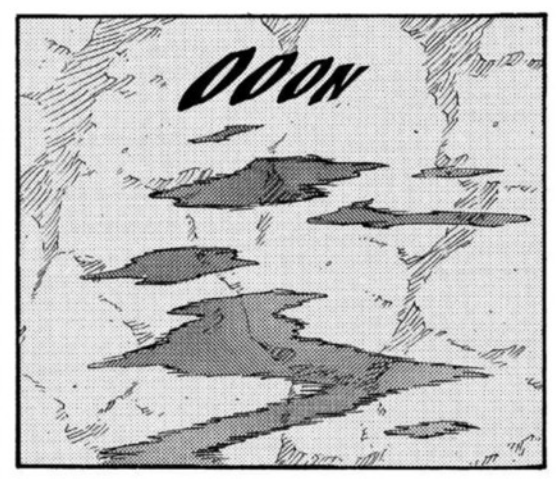

...


HE IS...
...THE ONE WHO BURSTS IN AND BARKS FIRST.

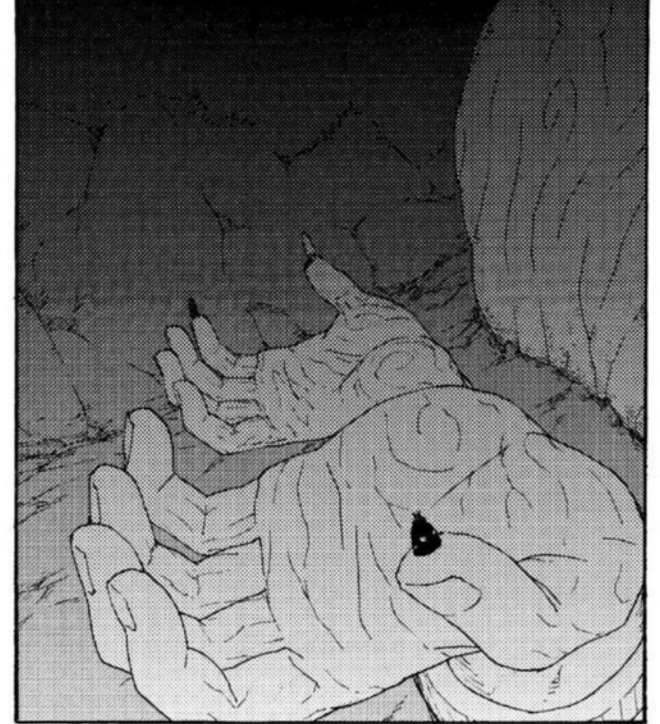

HUH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?


CAN'T YOU GIVE US MORE TO WORK WITH?
HMM?


BWOOON


OOON


HMPH.

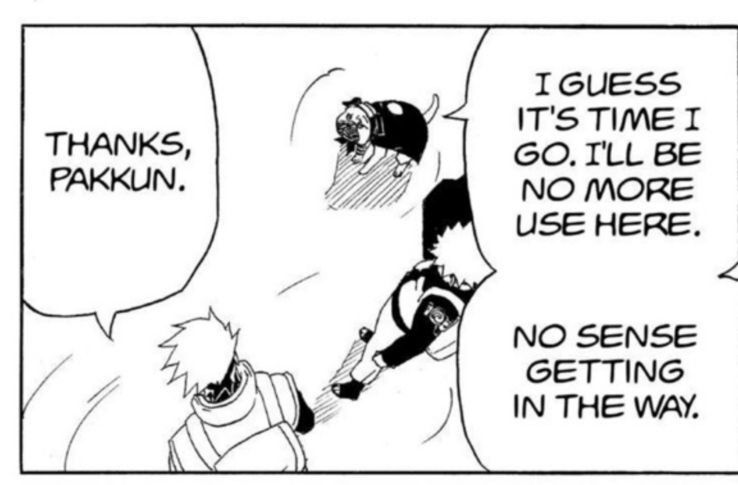

BWOON


I'LL BE WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU.

DHO OF

THUK
THUK

禁


I GUESS IT'S TIME I GO. I'LL BE NO MORE USE HERE.
NO SENSE GETTING IN THE WAY.
THANKS, PAKKUN.

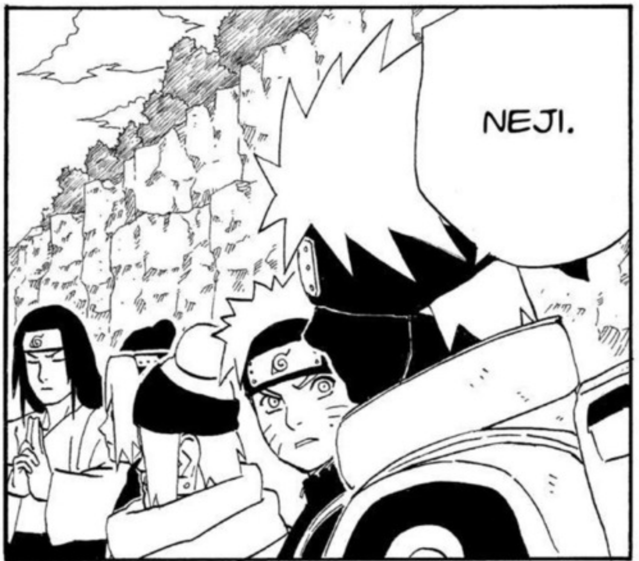

BOOF


ALL RIGHT!
KAKASHI, OUR FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS IS THIS BARRIER.
HOW DO WE GET PAST IT?


A FIVE-SEAL BARRIER IS ESTABLISHED BY PLACING FIVE TALISMANS IN THE NEARBY AREA. A SINGLE CHARACTER, *FORBIDDEN*, IS INSCRIBED ON EACH.


禁
ONE OF THESE IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF US. THERE ARE FOUR OTHERS.
UNTIL WE PEEL THEM ALL OFF, WE CAN'T DO A THING ABOUT THE BARRIER.


WELL, WHERE ARE THEY?
I MEAN, THE OTHER FOUR.
FWIP


NEJI.

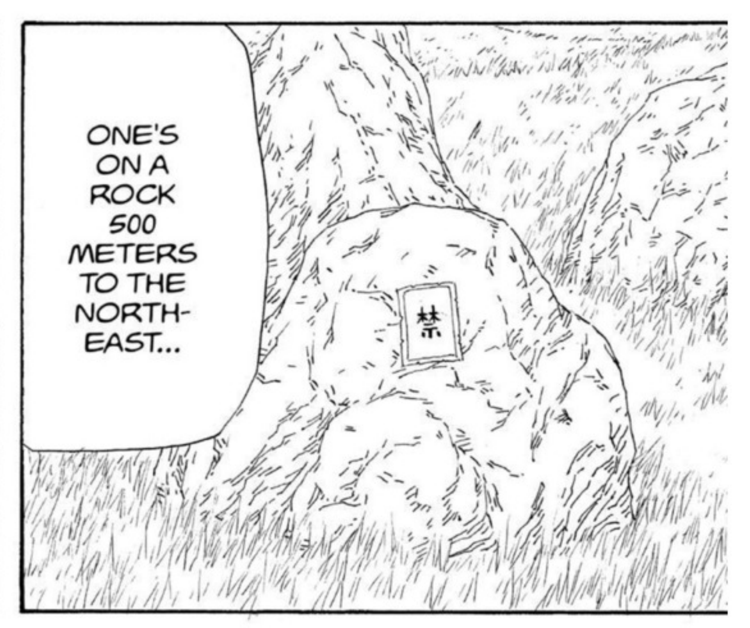

GOT IT.

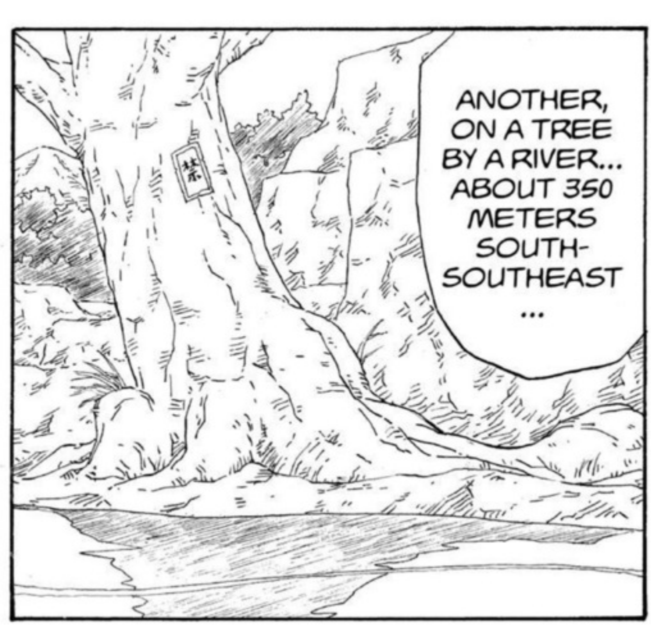

GRR
RRR
BYAKU-GAN!

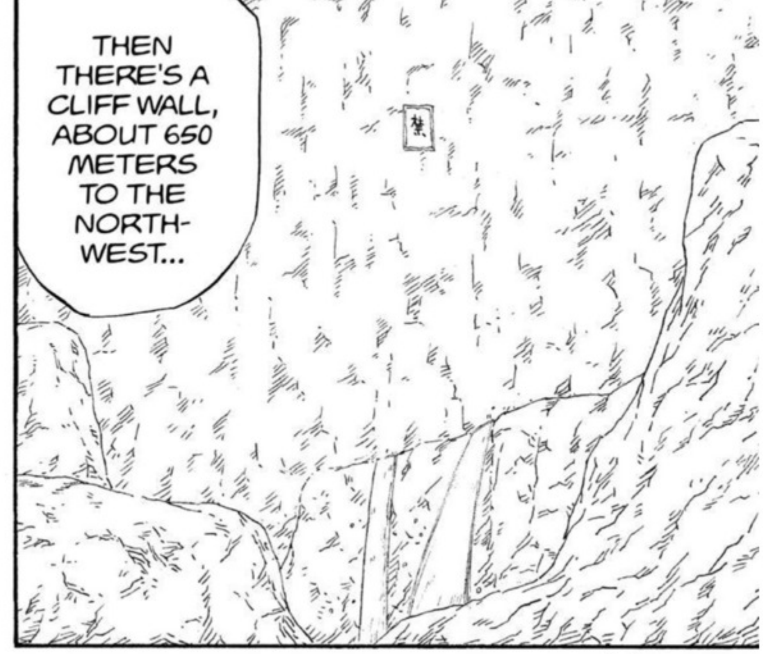


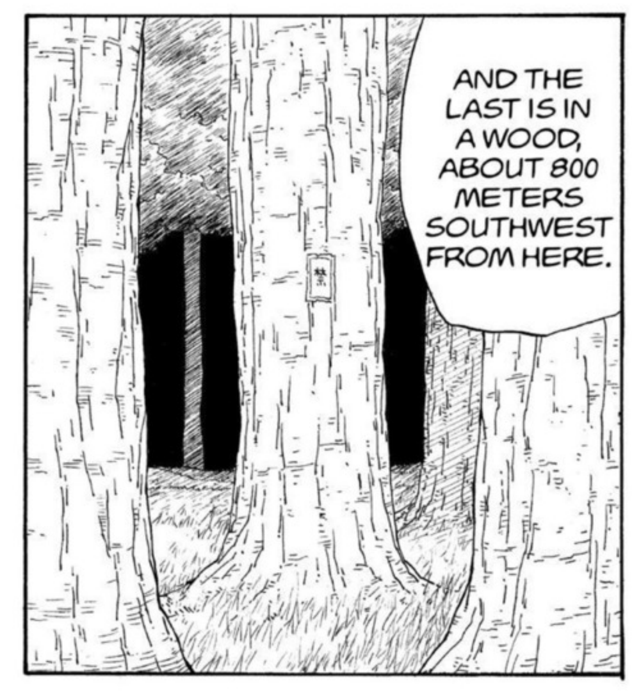
ZWOOOOM


I SEE THEM.


ONE'S ON A ROCK 500 METERS TO THE NORTH-EAST...
禁


ANOTHER, ON A TREE BY A RIVER... ABOUT 350 METERS SOUTH-SOUTHEAST ...


THEN THERE'S A CLIFF WALL, ABOUT 650 METERS TO THE NORTH-WEST...


AND THE LAST IS IN A WOOD, ABOUT 800 METERS SOUTHWEST FROM HERE.


ALL RIGHT! THEY'RE ALL WITHIN WIRELESS RANGE.
SHF
TAKE THESE. NEJI WILL GUIDE US...
...STRAIGHT TO THE TALISMANS.


SNAP


SHRIK


CHUP


MY TEAM IS FASTER. WE'LL HANDLE IT.
THE FREQUENCY'S AT 174.
HANG TIGHT UNTIL I TOUCH BASE.
DING

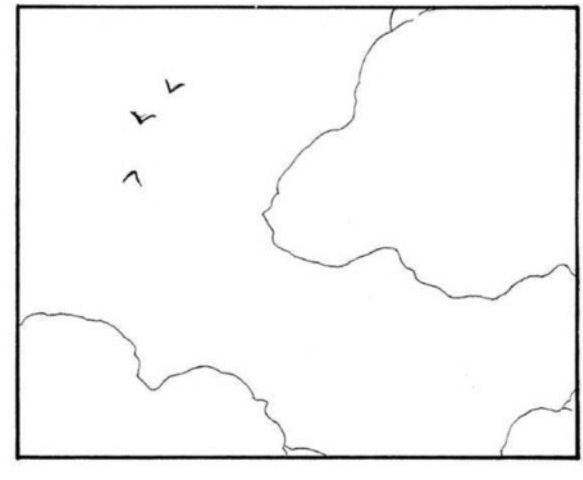

ALL SET TO GO.
KLIK


WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU...


TEAM GUY! LET'S GO FORTH WITH THE POWER OF YOUTH!
FSSH
SCATTER!!

FOOSH
SPASH SPASH
SPASH


GAARA...




READ
THIS
WAY


SKFF
LEE, HEAD A LITTLE MORE SOUTH.


OKAY, I FOUND IT!
TUMP


I GOT ONE TOO!


GOOD! NOW...
...PEEL AWAY!


RIP RIP


RIP


RIP


SHRIP

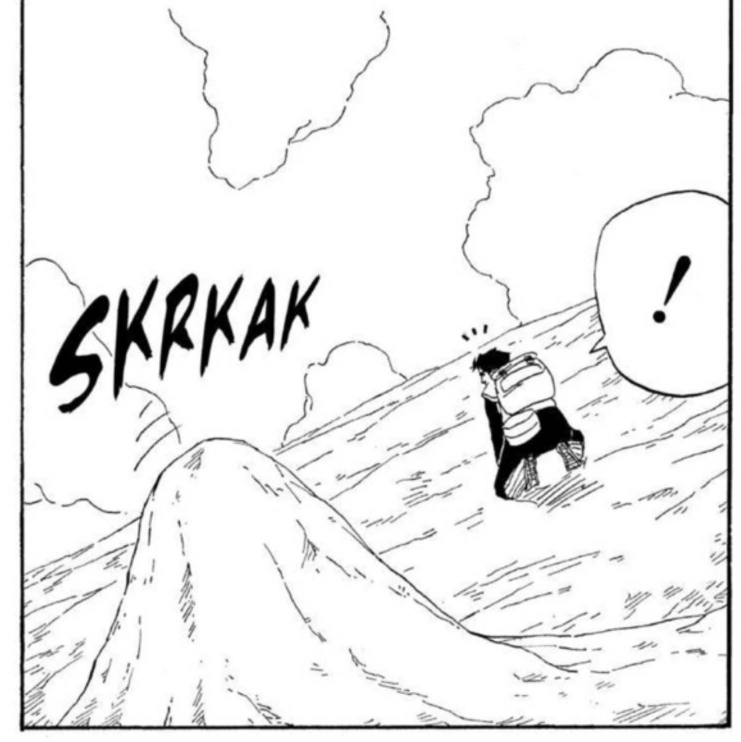
SO TO BREAK IN, I'M THINKING WE'LL NEED A *SWITCH HOOK ENTRY.*

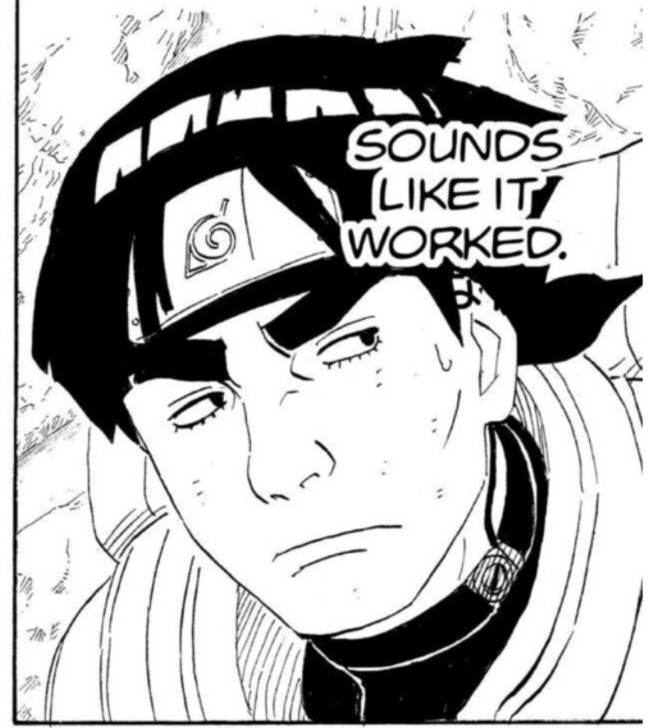







SHRAKK

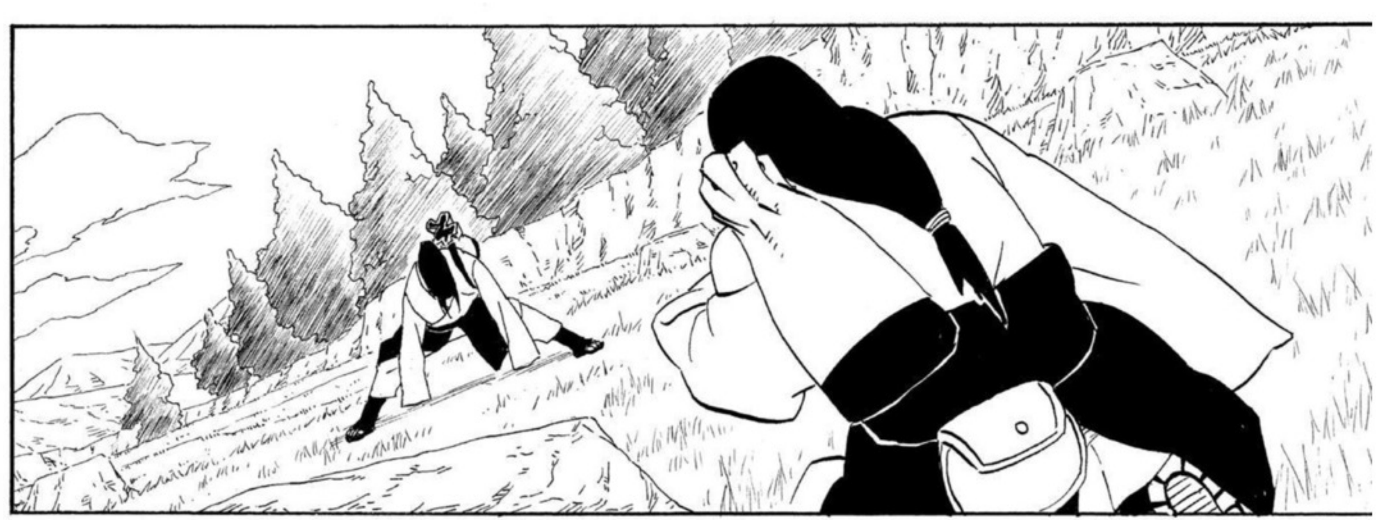

SKRKAK
!


SOUNDS LIKE IT WORKED.


NEJI...
PIP

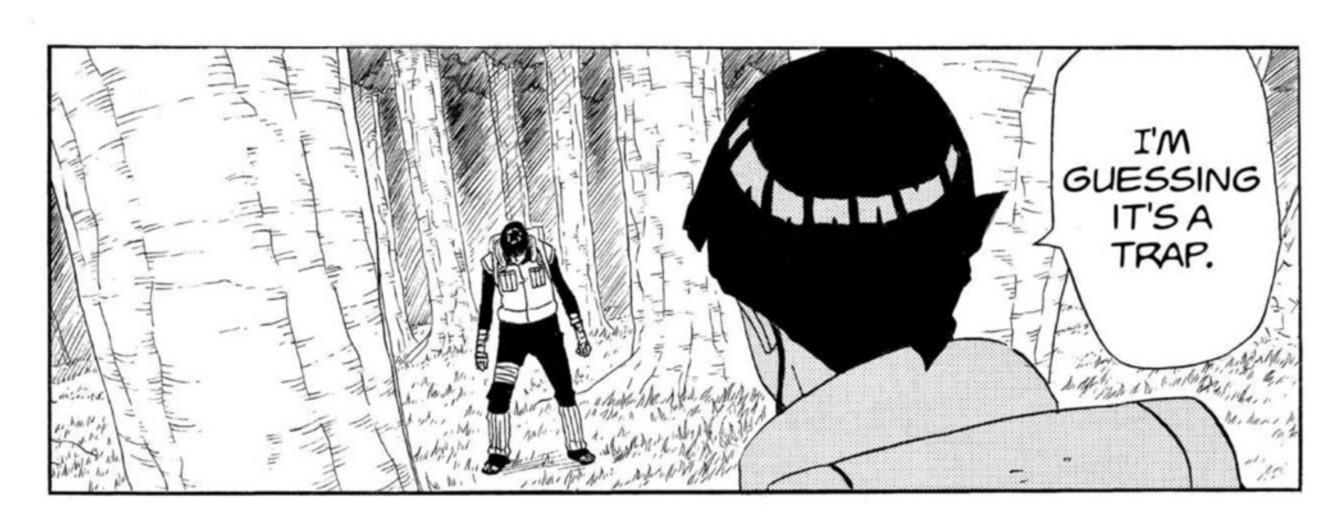

SKRKAK

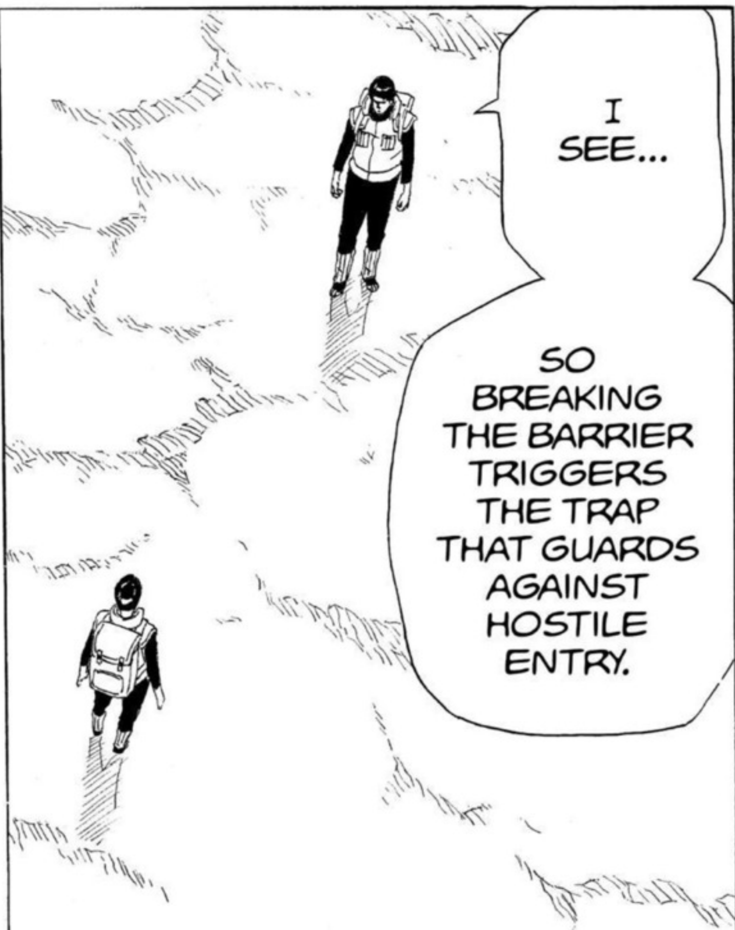

YEAH... SAME OVER HERE.

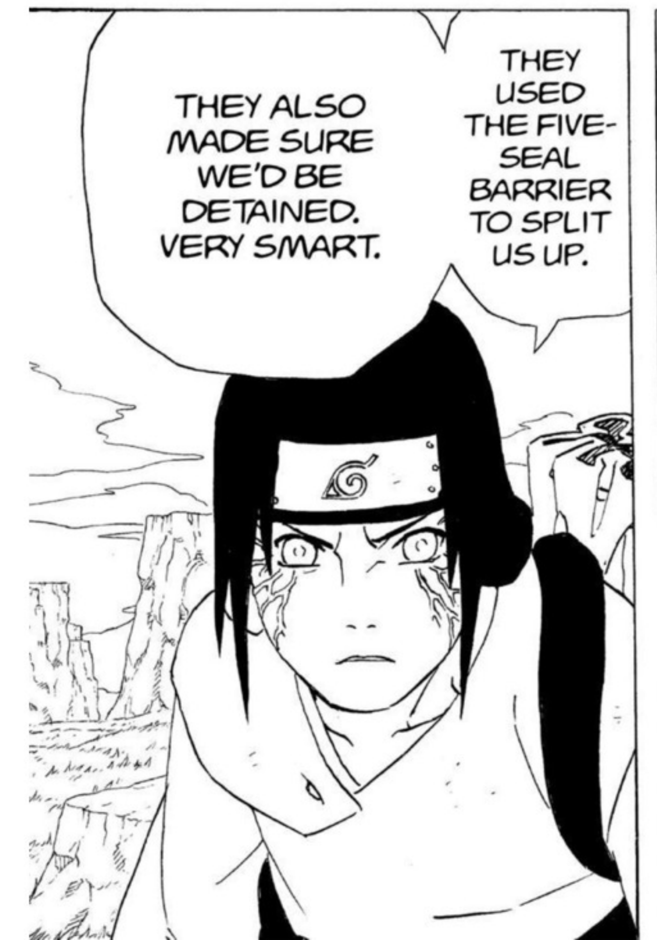



READ THIS WAY


WHAT IS THIS?


I'M GUESSING IT'S A TRAP.

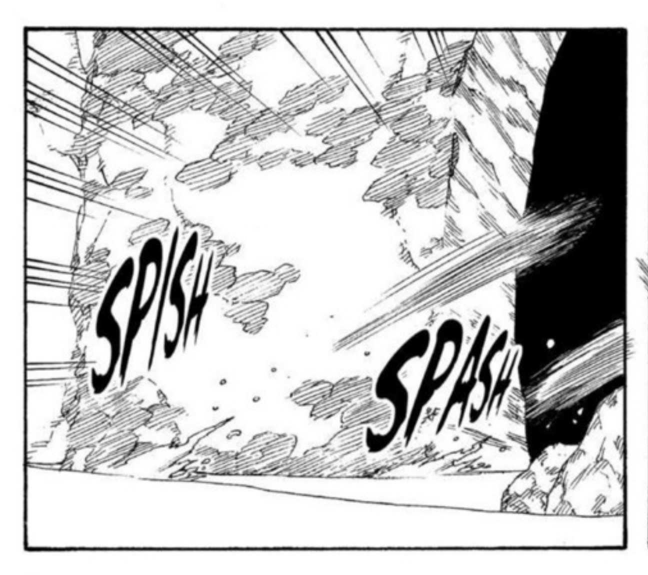

I SEE...
SO BREAKING THE BARRIER TRIGGERS THE TRAP THAT GUARDS AGAINST HOSTILE ENTRY.

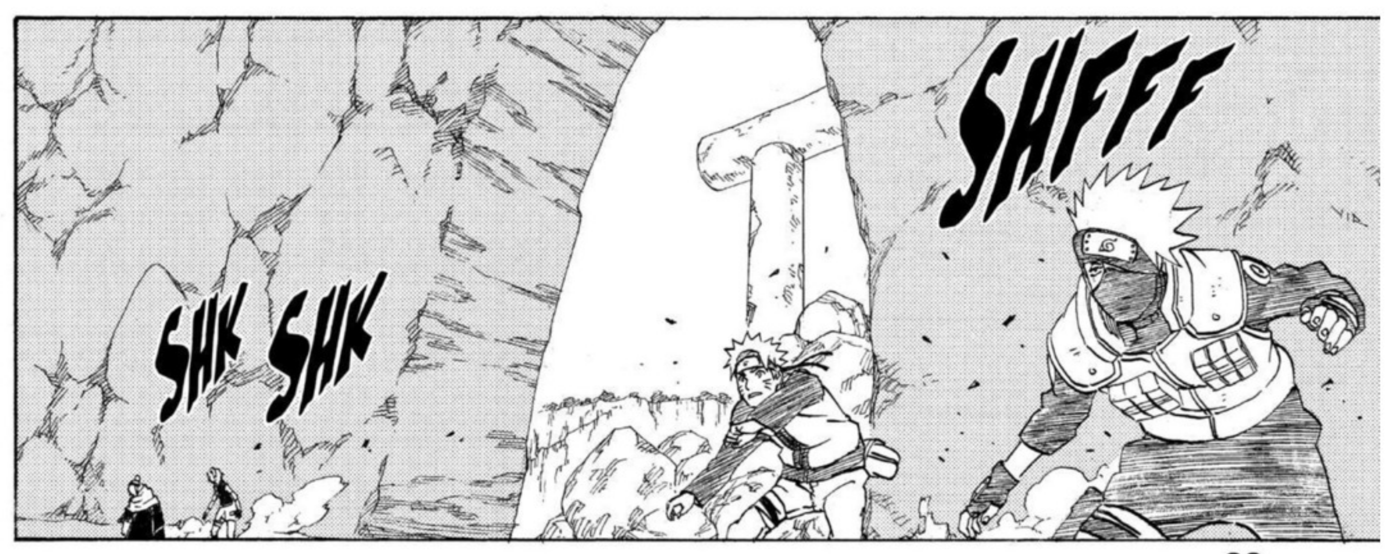

THEY USED THE FIVE-SEAL BARRIER TO SPLIT US UP.
THEY ALSO MADE SURE WE'D BE DETAINED. VERY SMART.


SPLOSH
RNCH
SKRUNK


PIP


SPASH
SPISH


SPASH
SPISH


SHFFF
SHK SHK

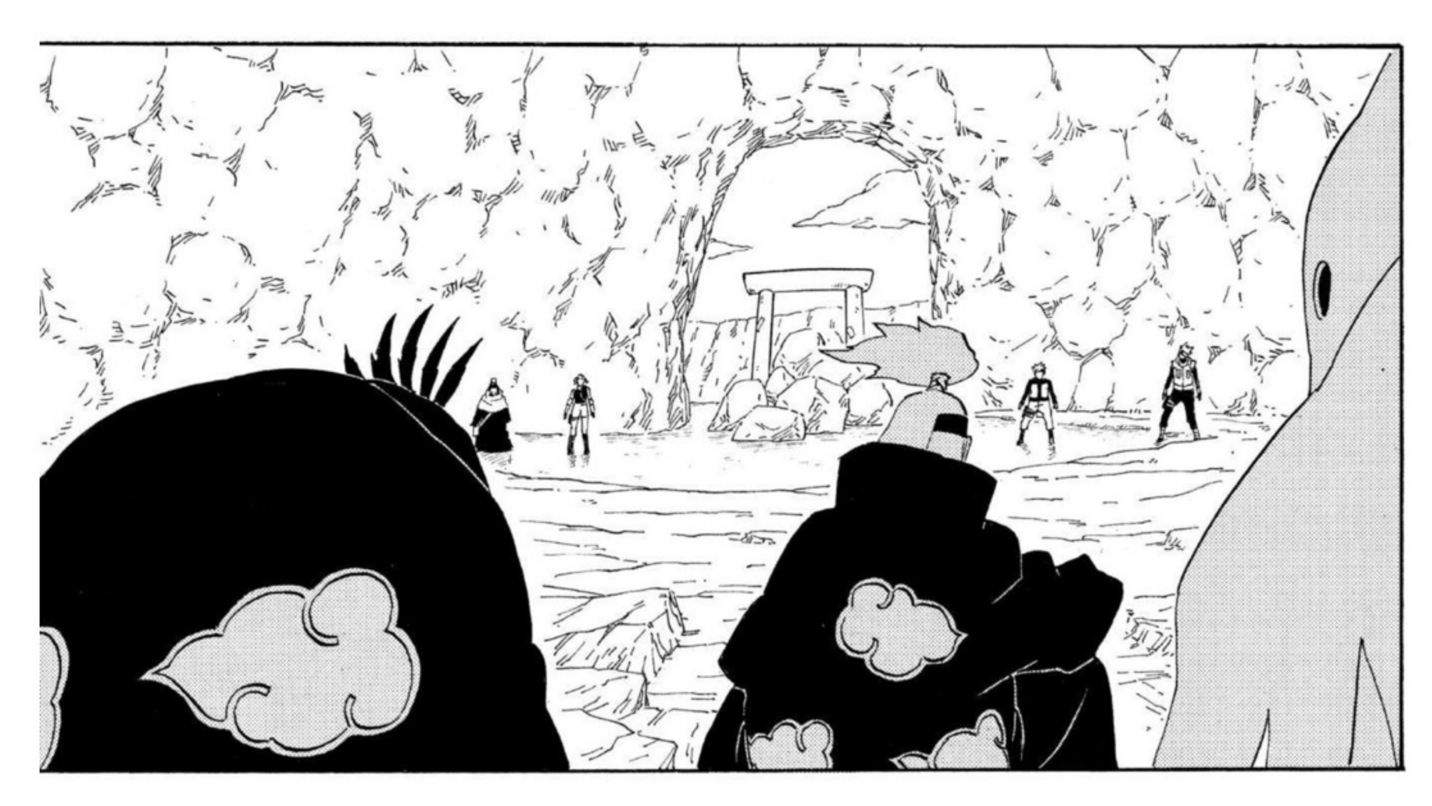

READ THIS WAY


!


...
WE'RE TOO LATE...


!


...!






SASORI...



NOW, LET'S SEE... WHICH ONE IS THE JINCHŪRIKI HOST? *HMMM?*


READ
THIS
WAY





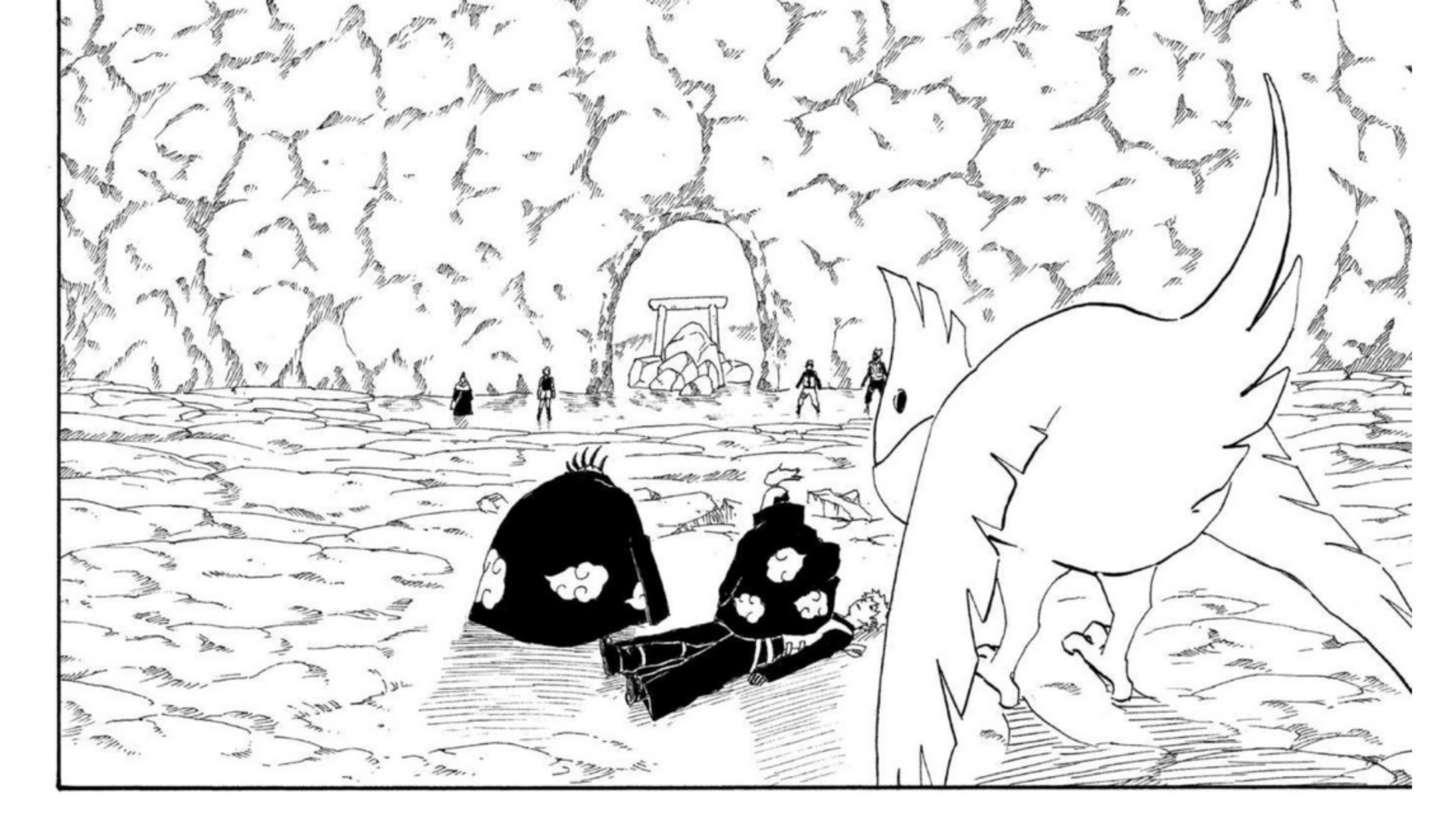


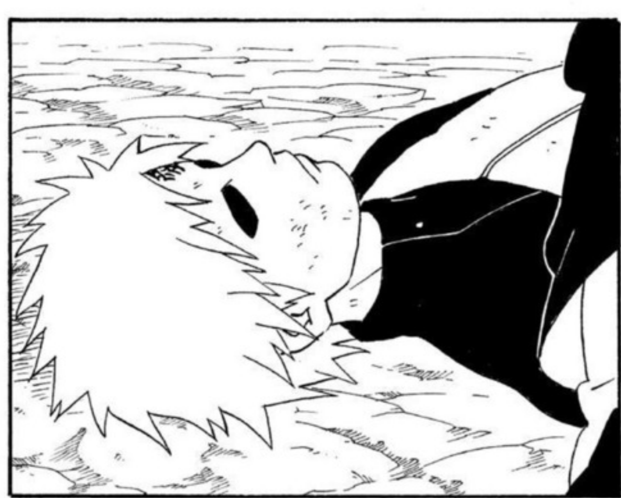

YOU!
YOU'RE DEAD MEAT!!


THAT WOULD BE HIM, THEN.
LOOKS LIKE IT...




Number 264:
Sasori's Masterpiece...!!





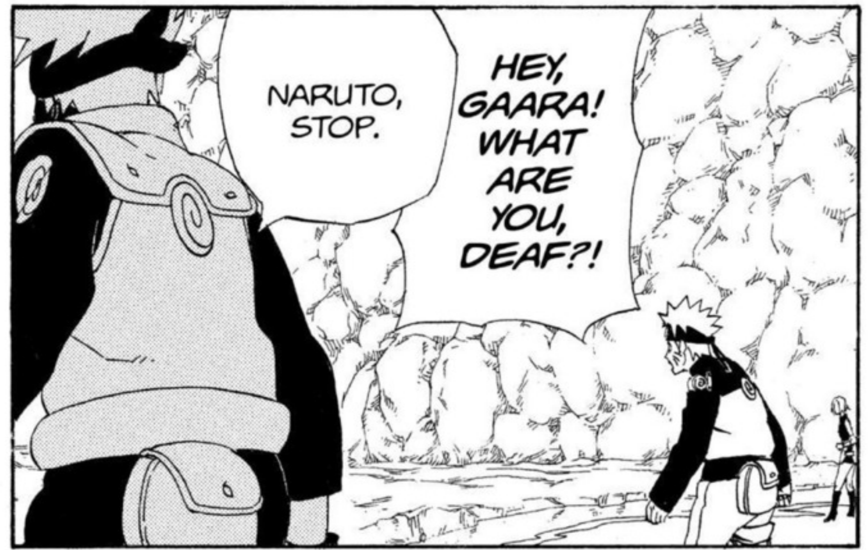

...


GAARA!
WHY ARE YOU JUST LYING THERE?!


GET UP!!













INDEED. I SHOULD THINK YOU'D KNOW...

THAT HE'S ALREADY DEAD. HMMM?


UNH


...!


...


GIVE HIM BACK.


...


AAA
GIVE ME GAARA! YOU STINK-ING...!!
SH


READ
THIS
WAY


?!
SKFF

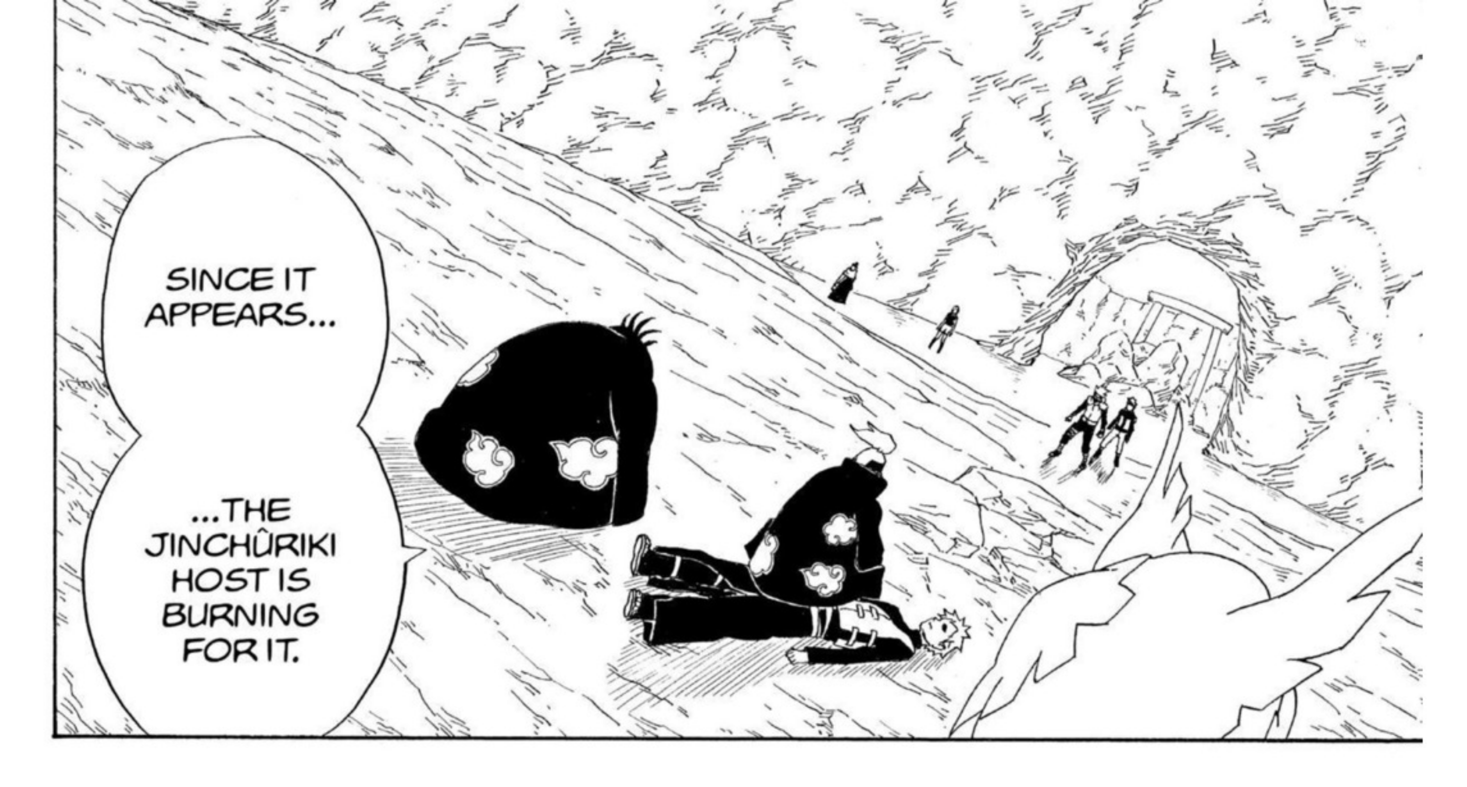

COOL IT.
CHARGE IN WITHOUT THINKING, AND YOU'LL GET US ALL KILLED.




URK...


...


I'LL HOLD ON TO THE BODY.


SINCE IT APPEARS...
...THE JINCHÛRIKI HOST IS BURNING FOR IT.




SASORI...
I KNOW THIS ISN'T WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR, BUT...


I'LL HANDLE THE JINCHÛRIKI HOST.
HMMM?


LISTEN, OUR QUOTA IS ONE APIECE.
IF I WERE YOU, DEIDARA, I WOULDN'T PUSH MY LUCK.

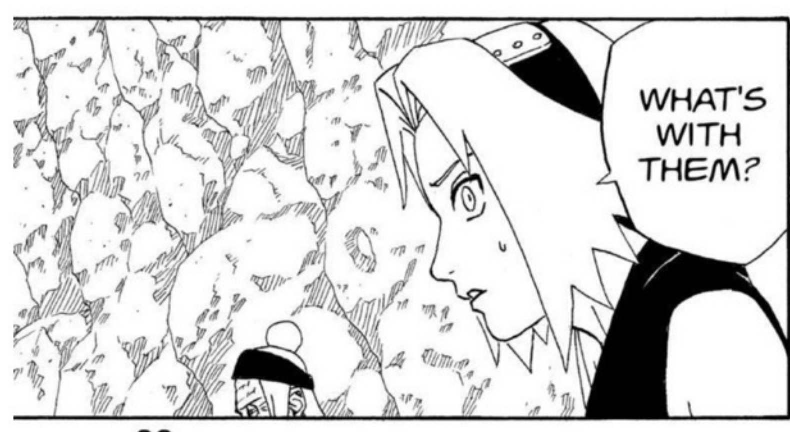

READ THIS WAY


AN ARTIST MUST ALWAYS SEEK EVER-GREATER STIMULATION...
LEST HIS SENSES TURN DULL.
THIS JINCHÛRIKI HOST OF THE NINE-TAILED FOX... FROM WHAT I HEAR, HE IS FAIRLY STRONG. *HMMM?*

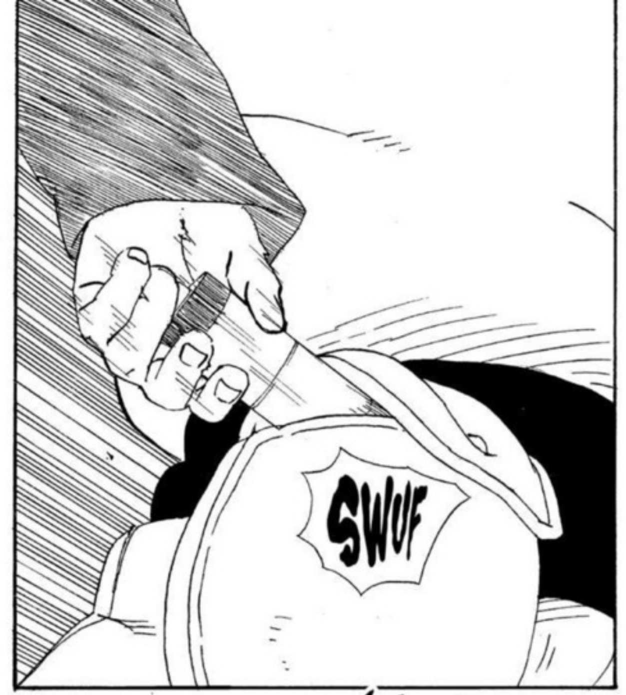

WHAT? THOSE PYROTECHNICS OF YOURS... *ART?*
ART IS A WORK OF BEAUTY, CAPTURED AND LEFT FOR POSTERITY... IT IS THE BEAUTY OF ALL ETERNITY.


QUITE SO, SASORI. AS A FELLOW ARTIST, I CERTAINLY...
...RESPECT YOUR PERSPECTIVE.
BUT, IN MY OPINION, ART IS TRANSIENT BEAUTY THAT FADES AFTER JUST A MOMENT. *HMM.*


...


WHAT'S WITH THEM?





FWOOSH

BOOF

SWUP



FWOOM

SKINK

CHUT

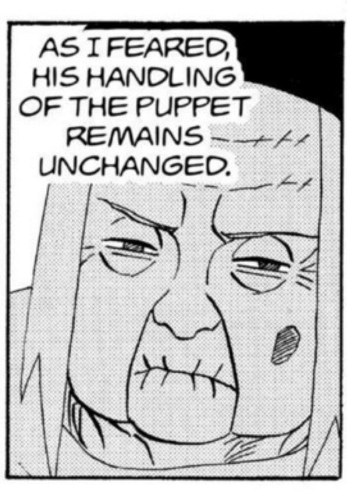
SHIK SHIK

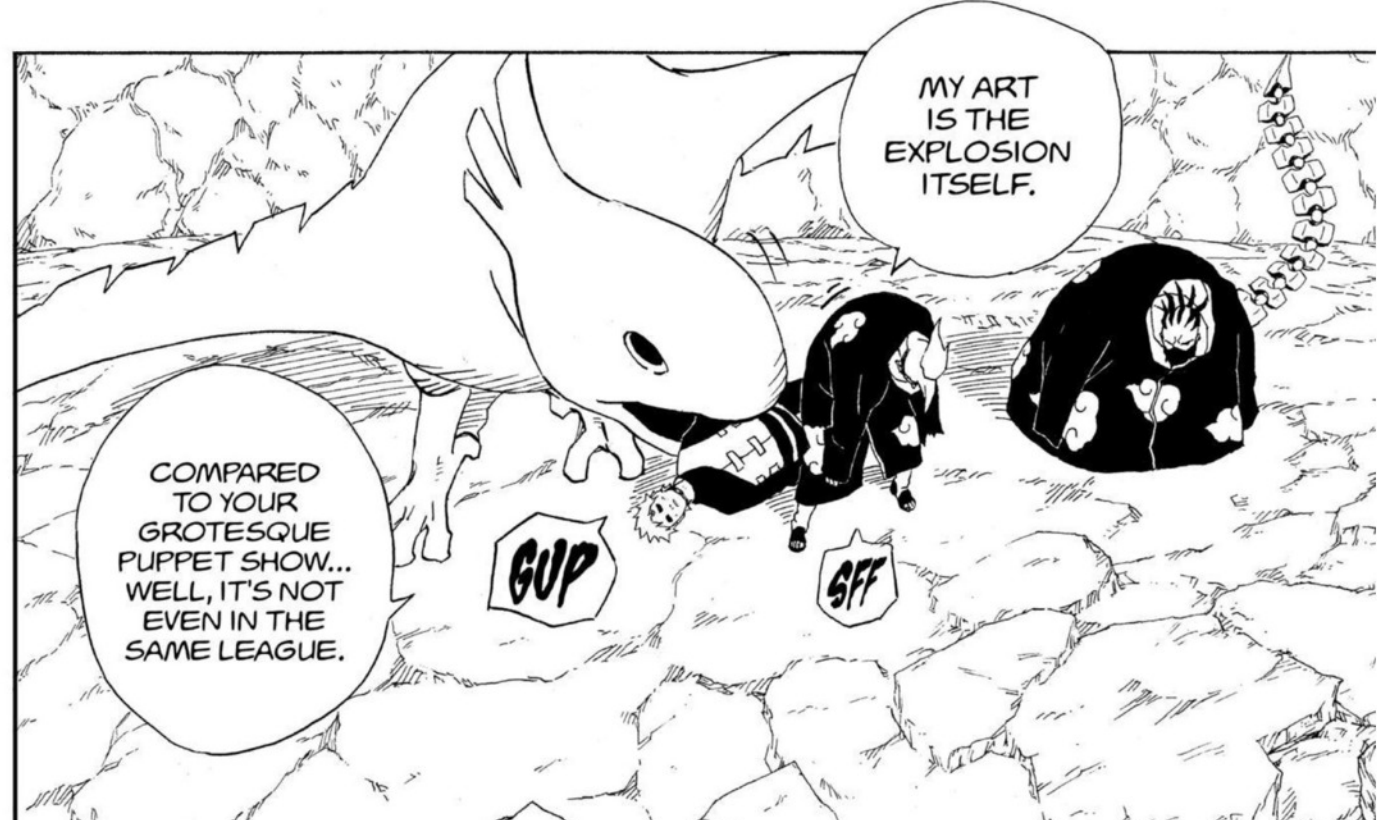

DEIDARA, YOU FOOL.
ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE ME ANGRY?
YOU SEE THERE?
I DID SAY YOU WOULDN'T LIKE IT, DID I NOT? HMMM?


...


HE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO LOOK.


GRR...

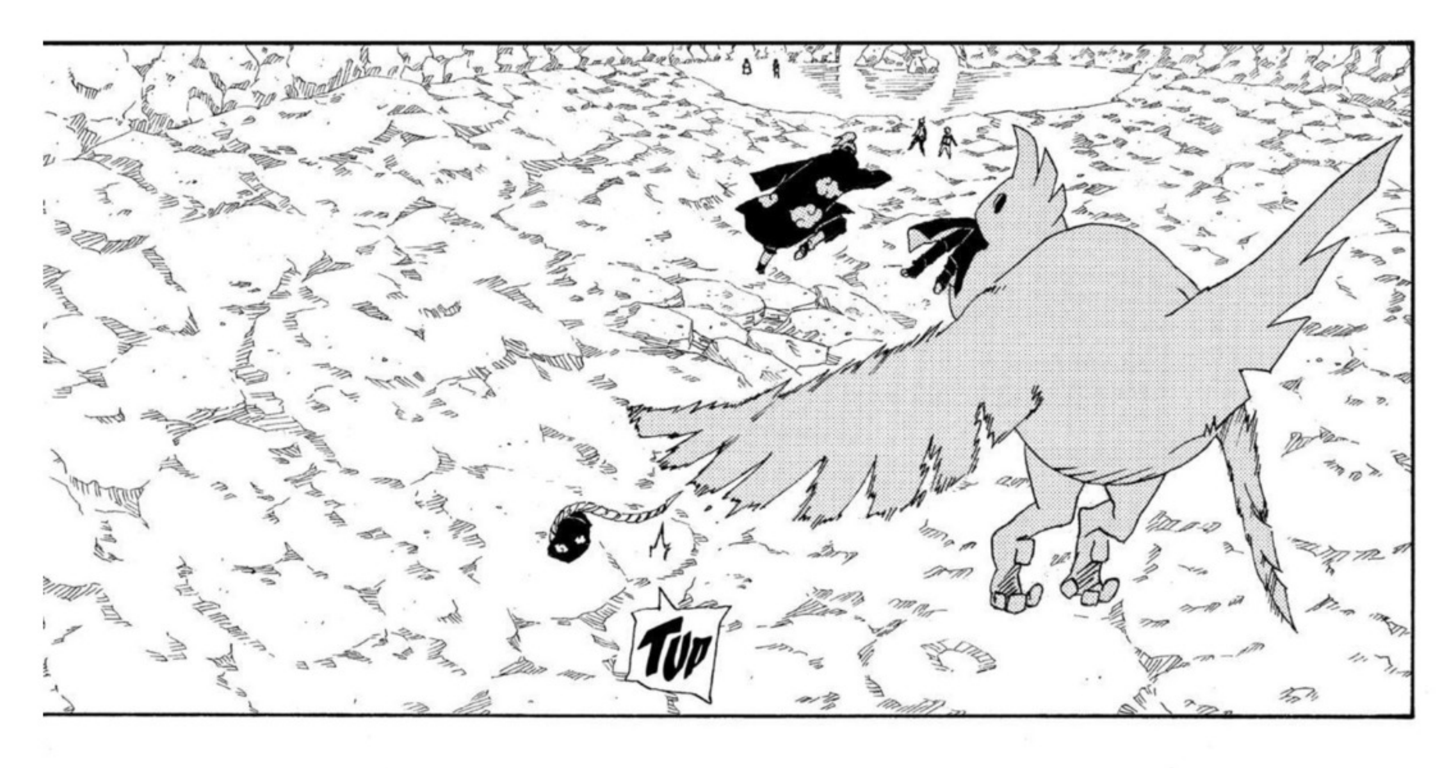

AS I FEARED, HIS HANDLING OF THE PUPPET REMAINS UNCHANGED.


MY ART IS THE EXPLOSION ITSELF.
SFF
GUP
COMPARED TO YOUR GROTESQUE PUPPET SHOW... WELL, IT'S NOT EVEN IN THE SAME LEAGUE.

READ THIS WAY

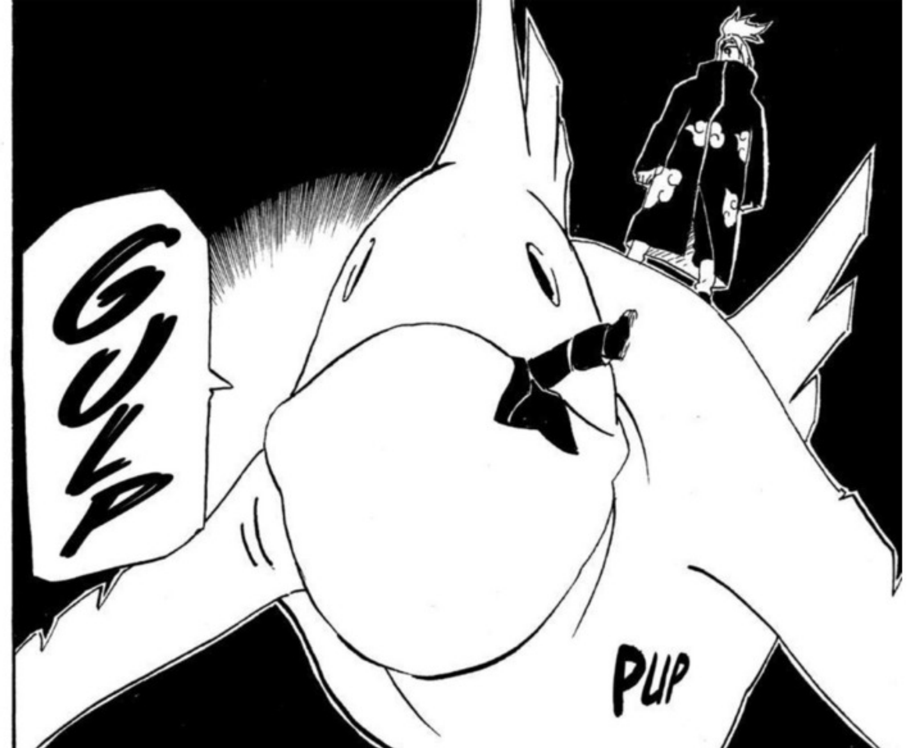




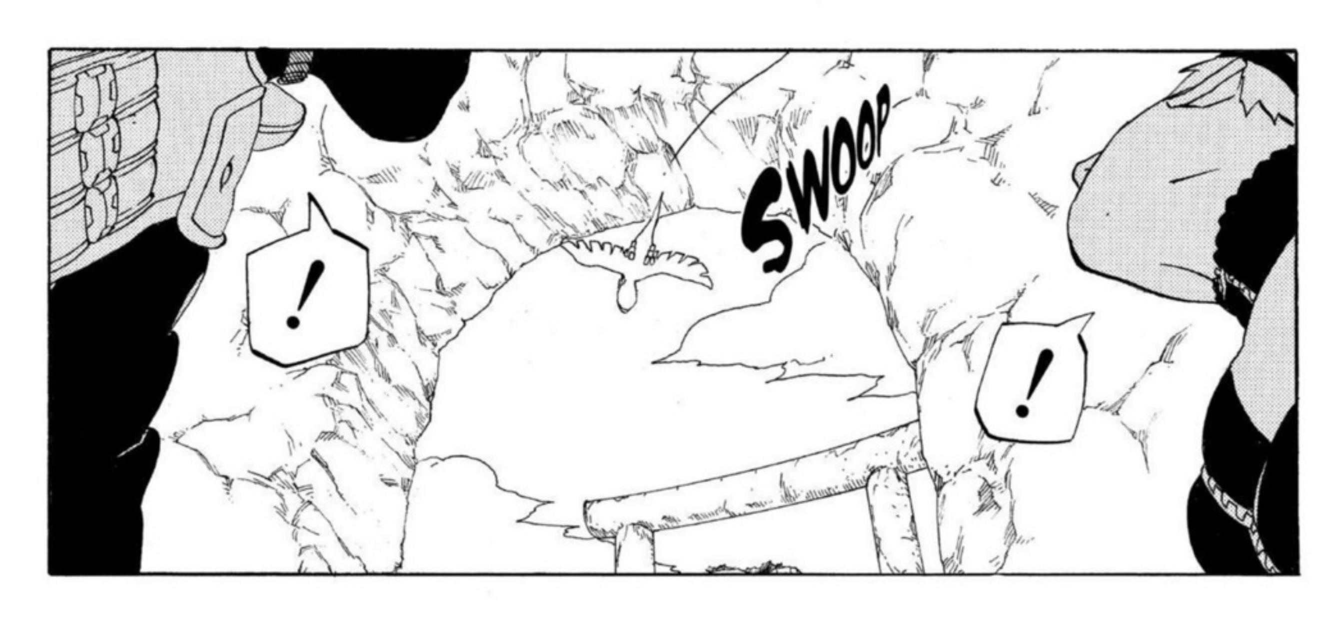







GULP
PUP


....!


!
SWOOP
!

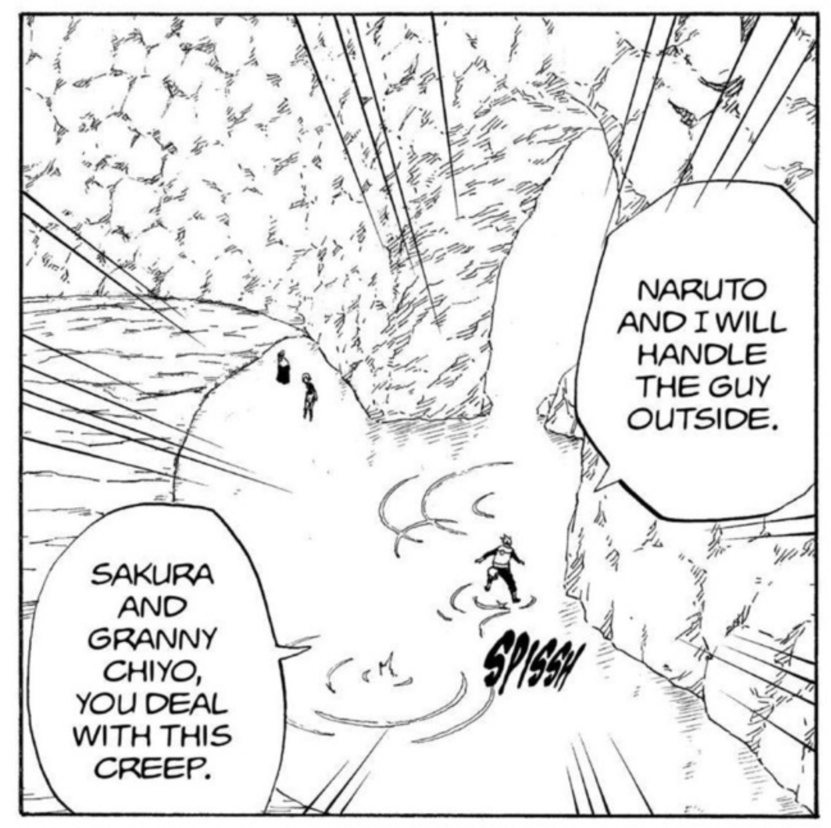

HEY! WAIT UP!
PISH PISH

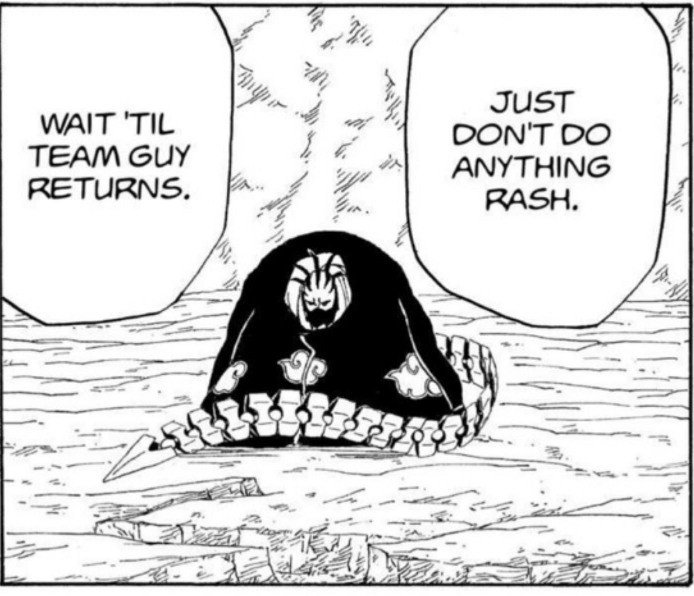


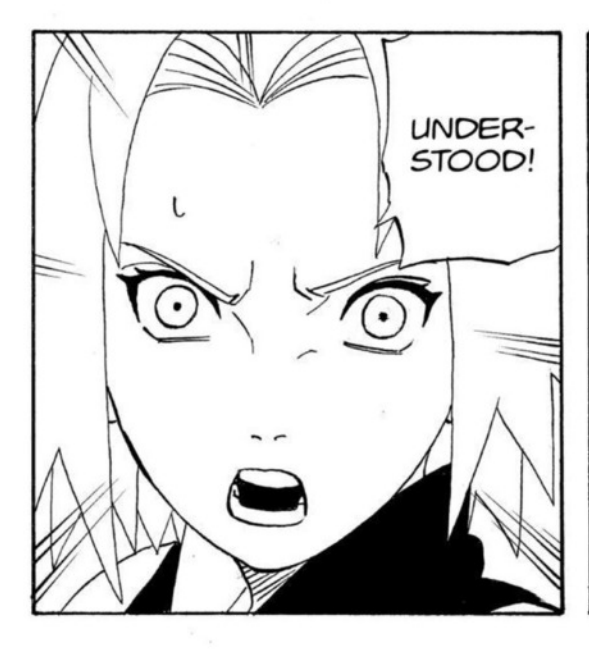

PERFECT!


READ
THIS
WAY

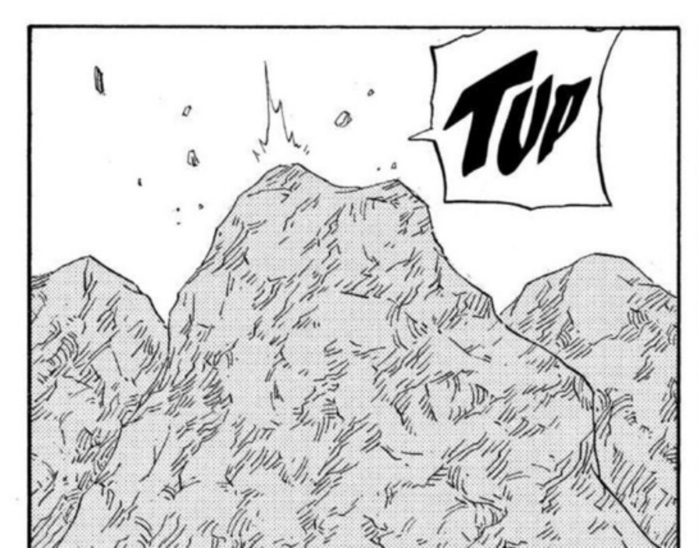

GRRR... AS ALWAYS, NARUTO JUST CAN'T HELP HIMSELF.
ZOOOM


NARUTO AND I WILL HANDLE THE GUY OUTSIDE.
SAKURA AND GRANNY CHIYO, YOU DEAL WITH THIS CREEP.
SPISSH


JUST DON'T DO ANYTHING RASH.
WAIT 'TIL TEAM GUY RETURNS.

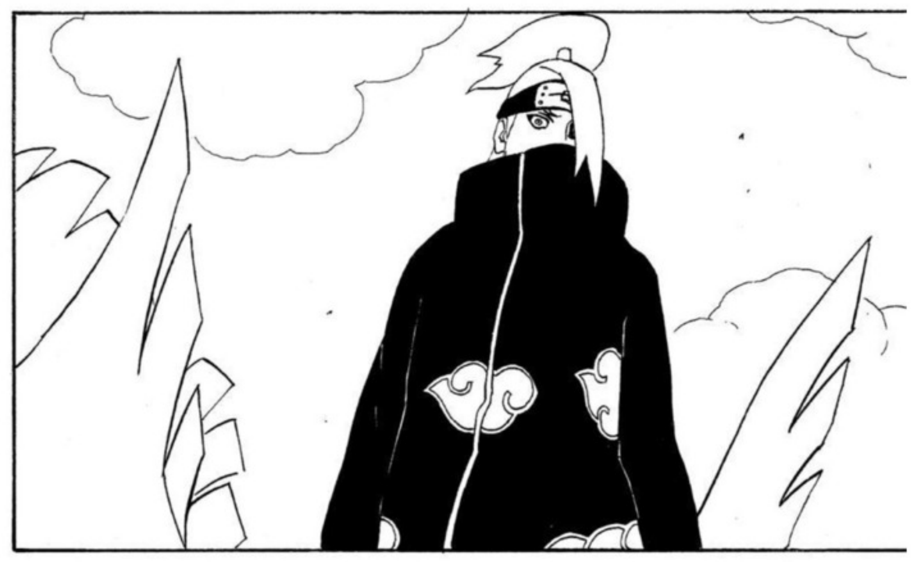

UNDER-STOOD!

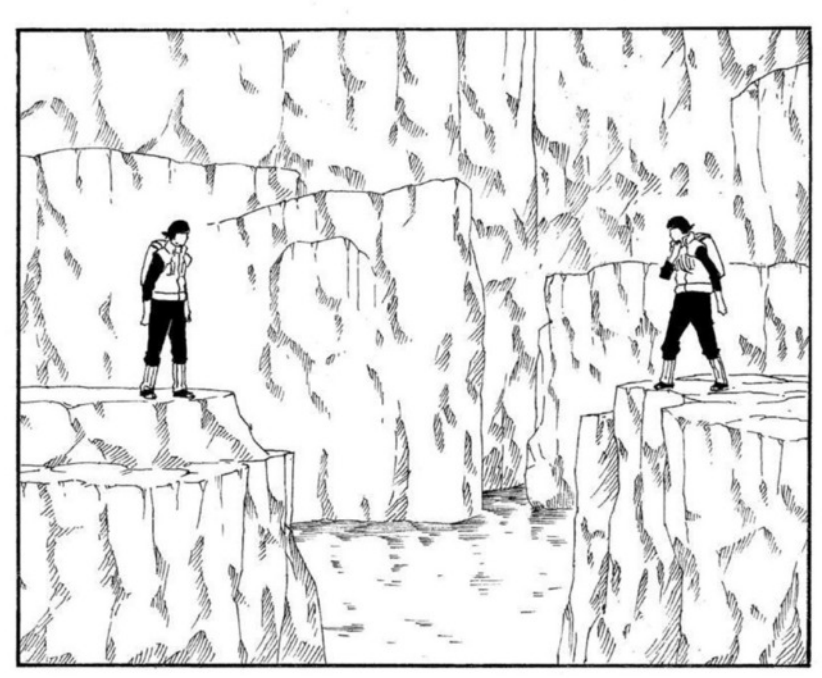

...


TUP


PLUP

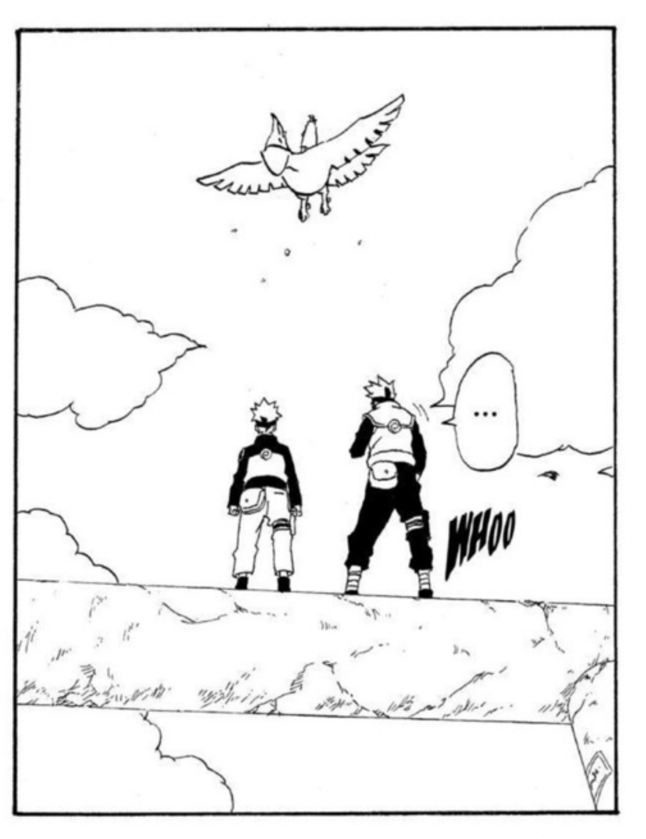

GUY, COME IN... CAN YOU RETURN IMMEDI-ATELY?
PIP



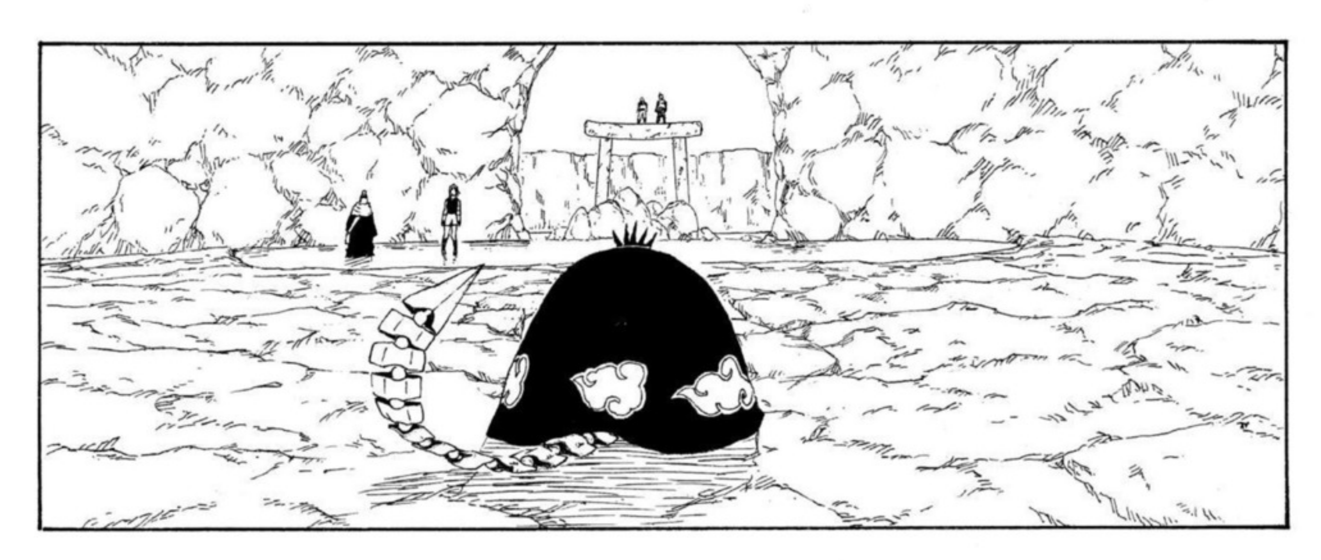



WE WOULD IF WE COULD... BUT WE'RE A BIT STUCK.
IT'LL TAKE A WHILE.
HUF
HUF


READ
THIS
WAY


...
WHOO


THERE'S NO TIME FOR DELAYS.
GRRR

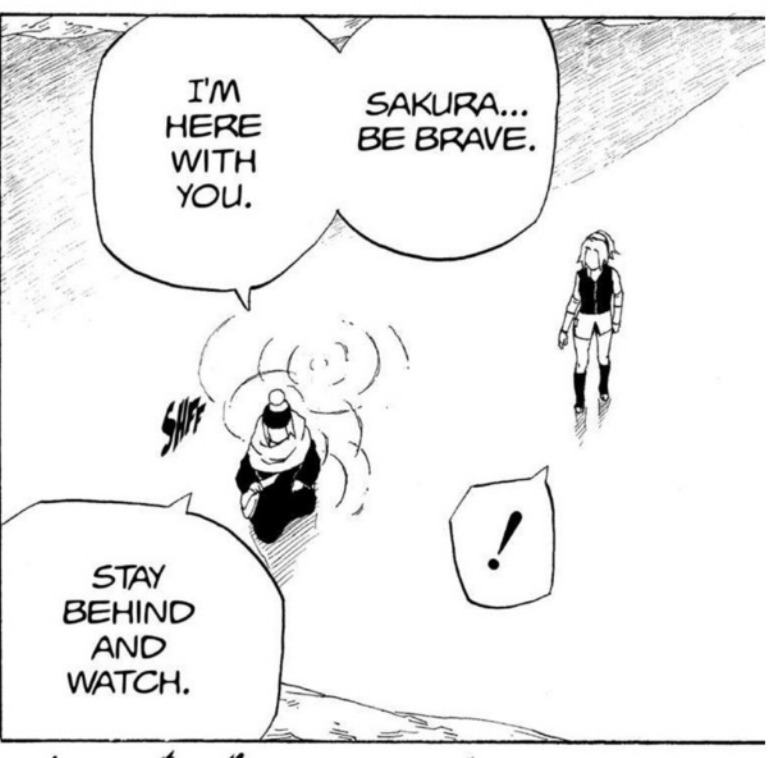


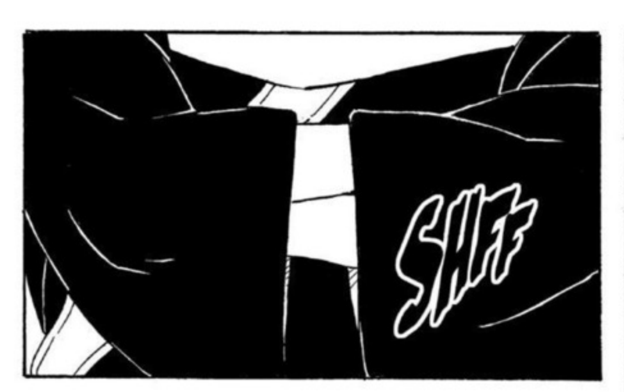

SIGH ...

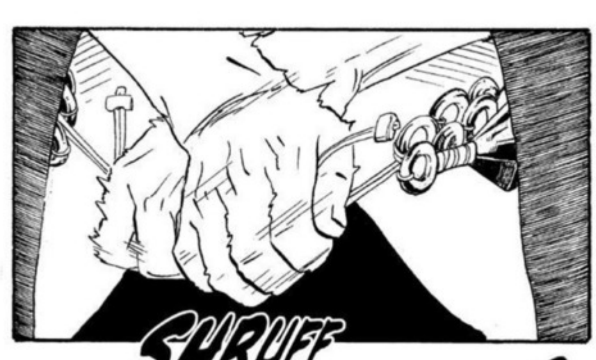

GRRR


JUST FACING HIM LIKE THIS, I CAN SENSE...
...THE HUGE DIFFERENCE IN OUR EXPERIENCE...


AND IN... OUR DEATH TOLLS.

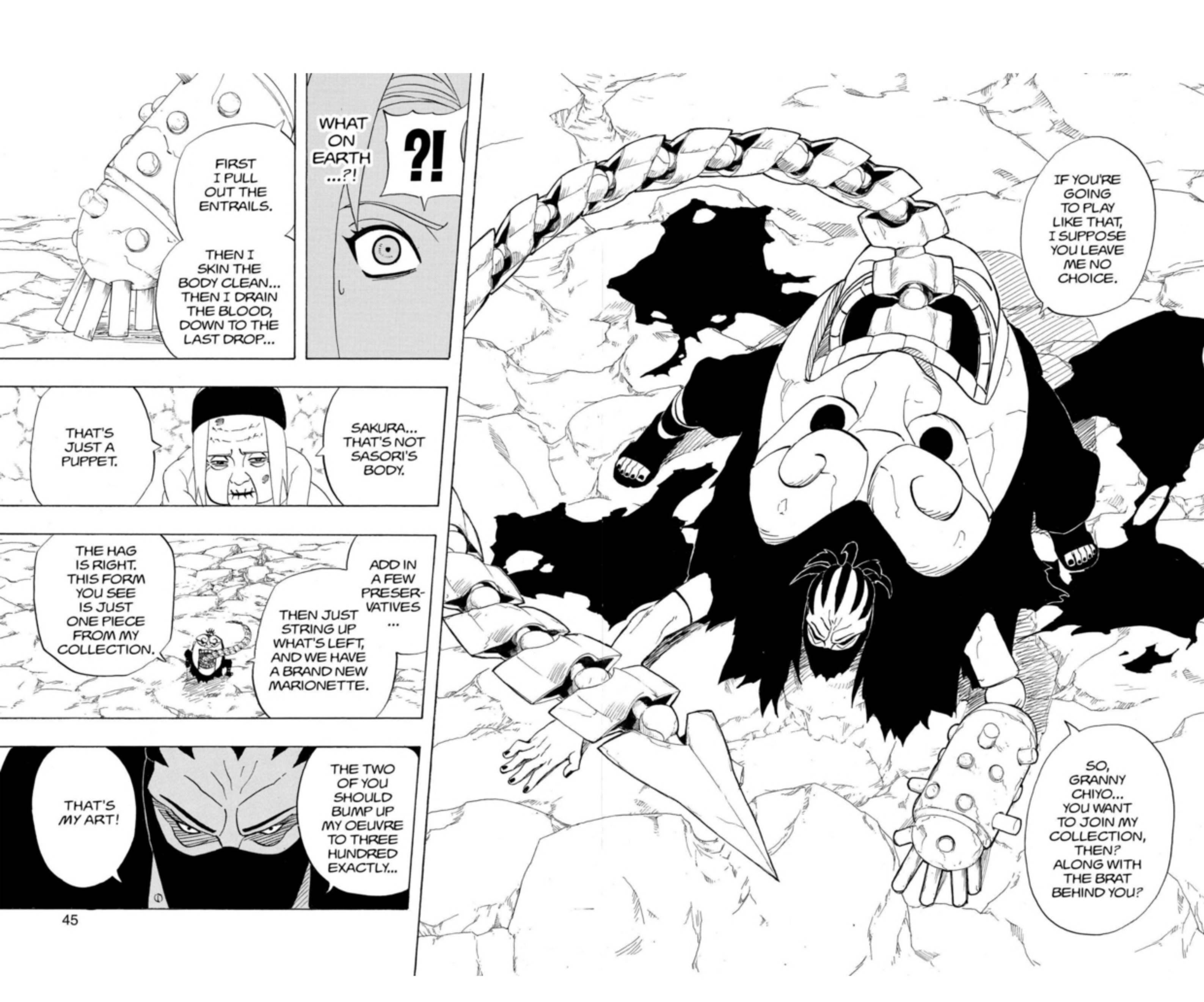

SAKURA... BE BRAVE.
I'M HERE WITH YOU.
SHFF
!
STAY BEHIND AND WATCH.


SHFF


SHRUFF


SHKLING
FIP
FIP
FIP
FIP


READ THIS WAY
FWISSH
FWFF
TING
TING
TING
TING
TOK
TOK
TOK
KAKINK
...
SHRIP
SHRIP
SHRAK
...?!



IF YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY LIKE THAT, I SUPPOSE YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE.
SO, GRANNY CHIYO... YOU WANT TO JOIN MY COLLECTION, THEN? ALONG WITH THE BRAT BEHIND YOU?
WHAT ON EARTH ...?!
?!
FIRST I PULL OUT THE ENTRAILS.
THEN I SKIN THE BODY CLEAN... THEN I DRAIN THE BLOOD, DOWN TO THE LAST DROP...
SAKURA... THAT'S NOT SASORI'S BODY.
THAT'S JUST A PUPPET.
ADD IN A FEW PRESER-VATIVES ...
THEN JUST STRING UP WHAT'S LEFT, AND WE HAVE A BRAND NEW MARIONETTE.
THE HAG IS RIGHT. THIS FORM YOU SEE IS JUST ONE PIECE FROM MY COLLECTION.
THE TWO OF YOU SHOULD BUMP UP MY OEUVRE TO THREE HUNDRED EXACTLY...
THAT'S MY ART!

THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
PERSONAL HISTORY: A TRIP ABROAD

ALTHOUGH THE COLLEGE I ATTENDED WASN'T THAT AMAZING, IT DID OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT OVERSEAS ART MUSEUMS. THE TRIP WASN'T MANDATORY OR ANYTHING, SO I WASN'T PLANNING TO SIGN UP. THERE SEEMED LITTLE POINT IN TRAVELING ABROAD JUST TO VISIT ART MUSEUMS. BESIDES, IT WAS SUPER EXPENSIVE. THERE WAS NO WAY I COULD SWING IT ON A PART-TIME JOB. STILL, MY FATHER INSISTED THAT I SHOULD GO, RATTLING ON ABOUT COLLEGE AND TREASURED MEMORIES. HE'D EVEN PAY FOR IT HIMSELF, HE SAID. IF I HADN'T ACCEPTED, I MIGHT'VE GIVEN HIM A CONNIPTION. (AS A FATHER HE JUST HAD TO BITE THE BULLET. THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD TELL HIS SON IT WAS TOO EXPENSIVE TO GO.)

THE TOUR BROUGHT US TO SPAIN AND FRANCE. IN SPAIN, THERE WAS ONE MUSEUM I WAS PARTICULARLY LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING. WHEN WE GOT THERE, THOUGH, THEY WOULDN'T LET US IN. THEY TOLD US THEY'D JUST FOUND A BAG CONTAINING EXPLOSIVES. SO ALL WE WOUND UP SEEING WAS A BOMB SQUAD.

WHEN WE GOT TO FRANCE, I MADE A BEELINE FOR THE MONA LISA. I FIGURED, HEY, AFTER SPENDING SO MUCH MONEY ON THE TRIP, I SHOULD AT LEAST GET A GLIMPSE OF THE REAL MCCOY. THE PAINTING WAS SO POPULAR THAT IT HAD AMASSED A HUGE WALL OF PEOPLE, BLOCKING ANY VIEW. UNDAUNTED IN MY QUEST, I WAITED FOR AN OPENING. THE MOMENT A PERSON SHUFFLED AWAY, I DASHED FOR HIS PLACE. "AH, SO THIS IS THE MONA LISA!" NOT THAT I KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT THE PAINTING, REALLY, BUT I STILL ACTED LIKE IT TOUCHED ME.

AFTER A MOMENT OF GAWKING UP AT IT, I FELT THIS INTENSE PAIN ON MY CHEEK. "*YOWCH!*" FALLING TO THE GROUND, I REFLEXIVELY LOOKED BACK, ONLY TO SEE... AN OLD WOMAN. THIS WELL-BUILT, ELDERLY FOREIGN LADY, HER FIST STILL RETRACTING. A FIST! WELL, TWO GUESSES WHAT HAD STRUCK ME. I GUESS SHE NEEDED THIS GUY'S HEAD OUT OF THE WAY TO GET A BETTER VIEW.

SO, WELL, IF I SUM UP MY TREASURED MEMORY OF THIS TRIP ABROAD, IT GOES LIKE THIS: BEING PUNCHED DOWN BY A LITTLE OLD FOREIGN LADY RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE MONA LISA AFTER SPENDING A LOT OF MONEY TO SEE IT. THE OLD BIRD JUST STOOD THERE, TAKING SNAPSHOT AFTER SNAPSHOT OF THE PAINTING, EVEN THOUGH CAMERAS WERE PROHIBITED. NO MATTER WHAT COUNTRY THEY'RE FROM, IT SEEMS OLD WOMEN ARE ALWAYS FRIGHTENING.


Number 265: Granny Chiyo & Sakura

SPAKK





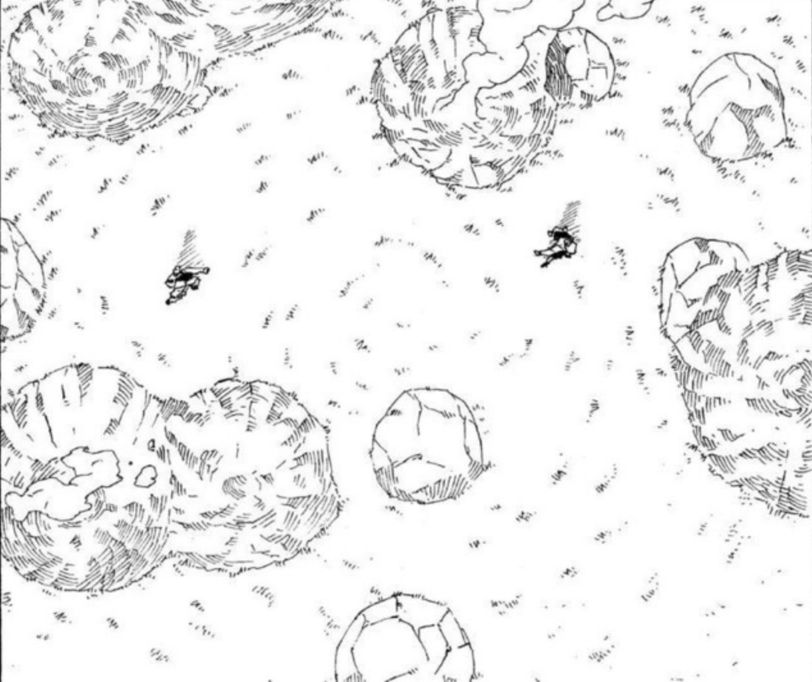
READ THIS WAY



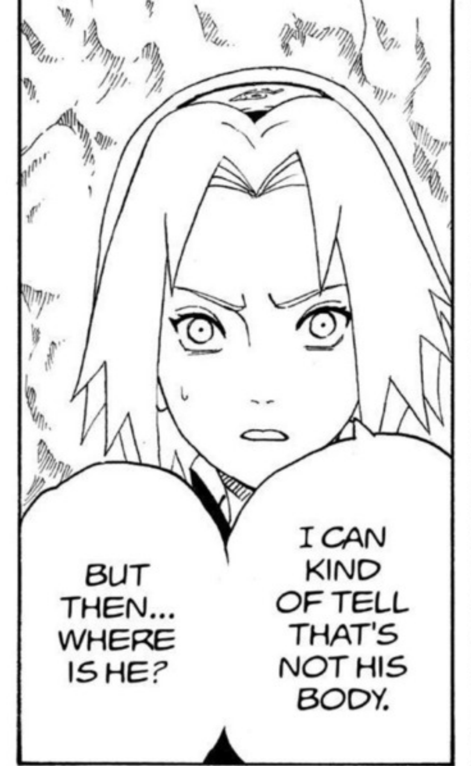


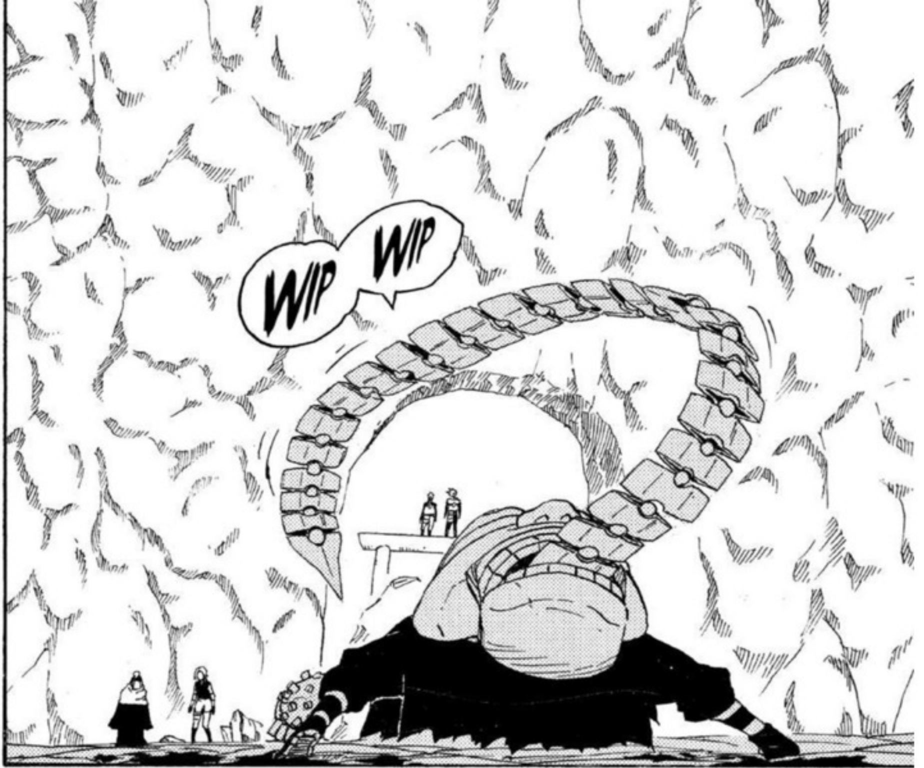


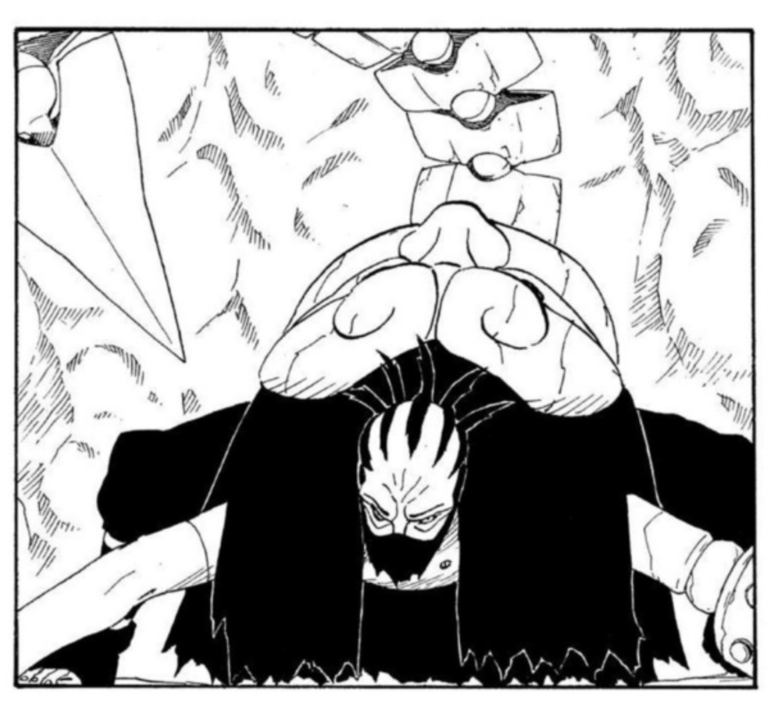


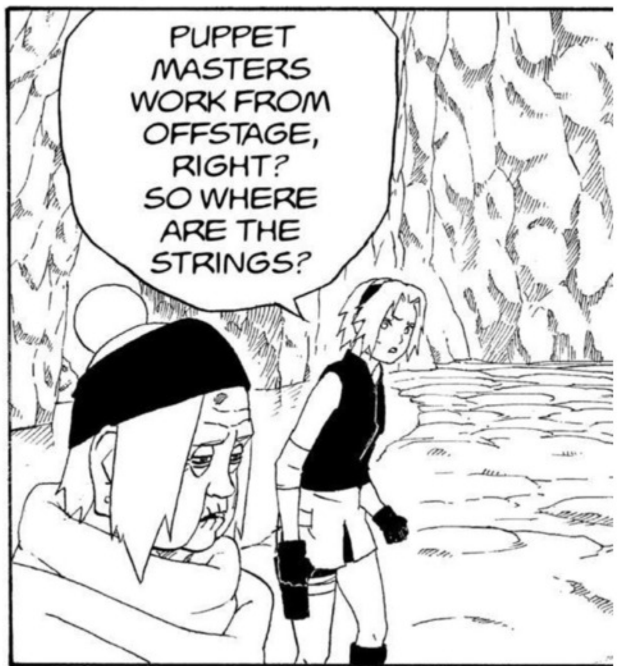





I CAN KIND OF TELL THAT'S NOT HIS BODY.
BUT THEN... WHERE IS HE?


WIP
WIP

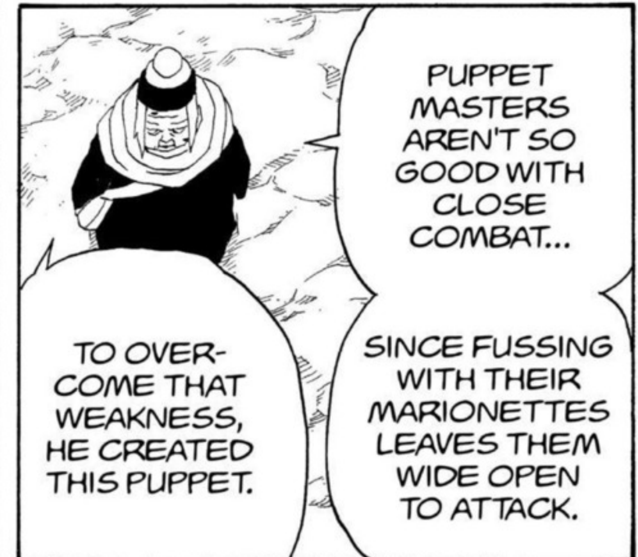



PUPPET MASTERS WORK FROM OFFSTAGE, RIGHT? SO WHERE ARE THE STRINGS?


!


HIS BODY IS INSIDE THE PUPPET.

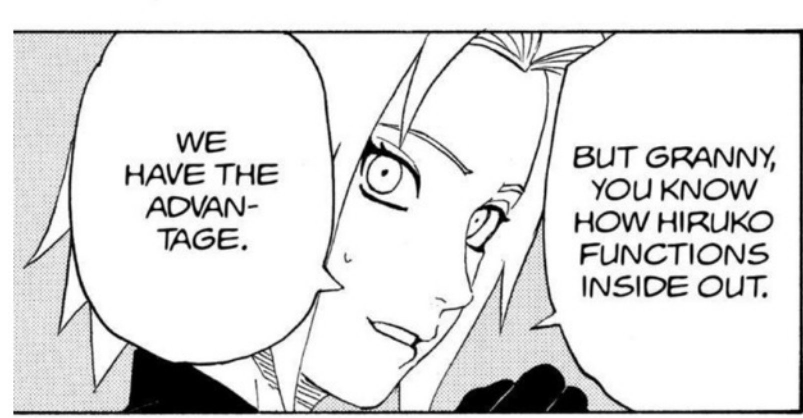

READ THIS WAY


PUPPET MASTERS AREN'T SO GOOD WITH CLOSE COMBAT...
SINCE FUSSING WITH THEIR MARIONETTES LEAVES THEM WIDE OPEN TO ATTACK.
TO OVER-COME THAT WEAKNESS, HE CREATED THIS PUPPET.


IT SERVES AS HIS ARMOR...
...AND AS HIS WEAPON.
IT'S SASORI'S FAVORITE PUPPET.
I'M FAMILIAR WITH IT. IT'S CALLED *HIRUKO.*


OKAY, SO... HOW DO WE FIGHT HIM?
WELL...
UNTIL WE DRAG SASORI OUT OF HIRUKO, THERE'S NO POINT.

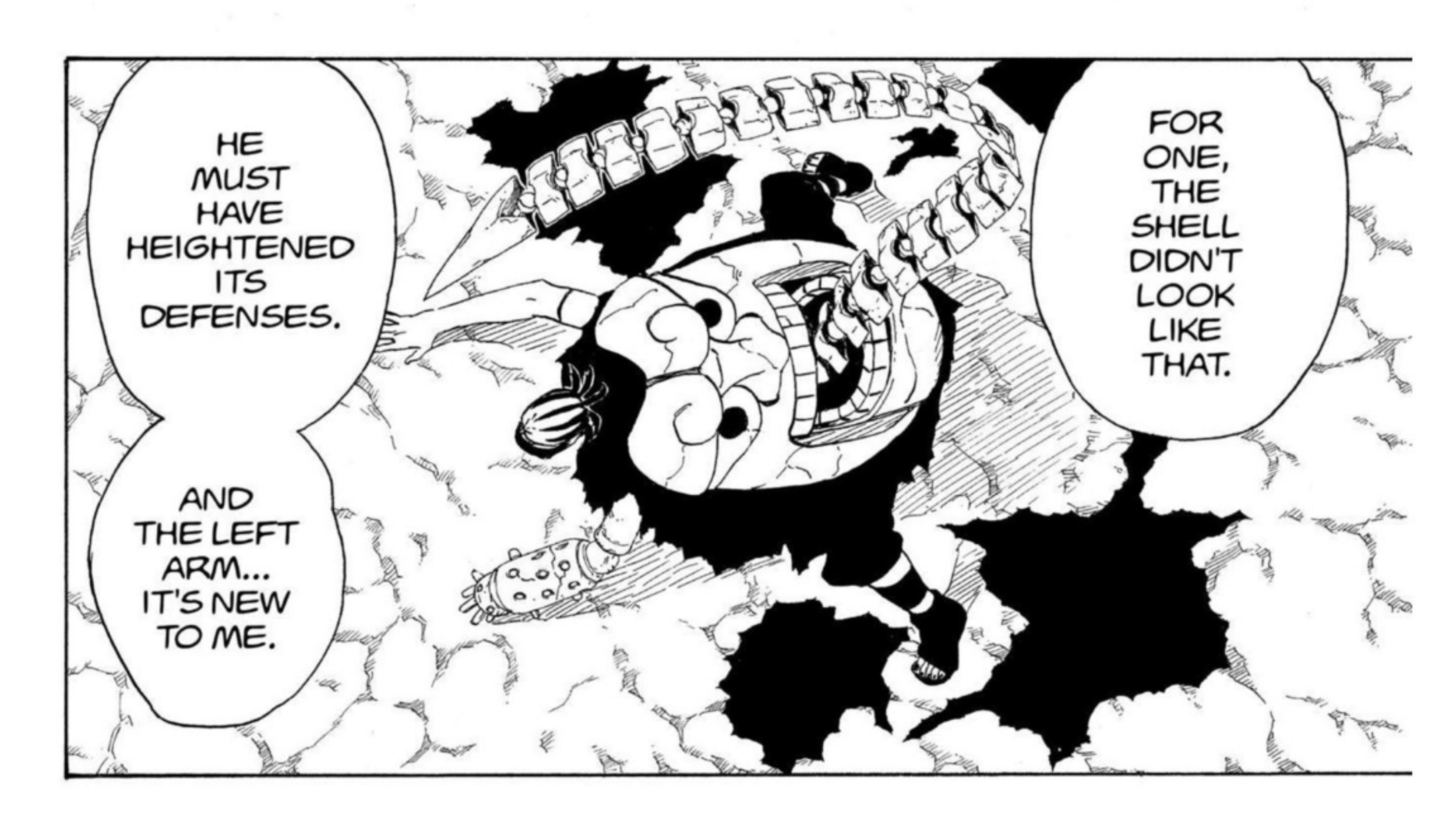

WHAT MAKES THIS PUPPET FORMID-ABLE...
...IS ITS MECHANISM. WE DON'T KNOW HOW OR FROM WHERE IT MAY LAUNCH ITS ATTACK.

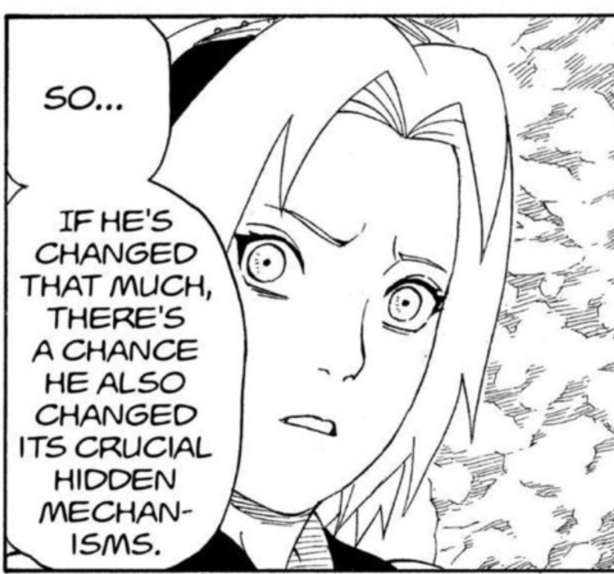

BUT GRANNY, YOU KNOW HOW HIRUKO FUNCTIONS INSIDE OUT.
WE HAVE THE ADVAN-TAGE.

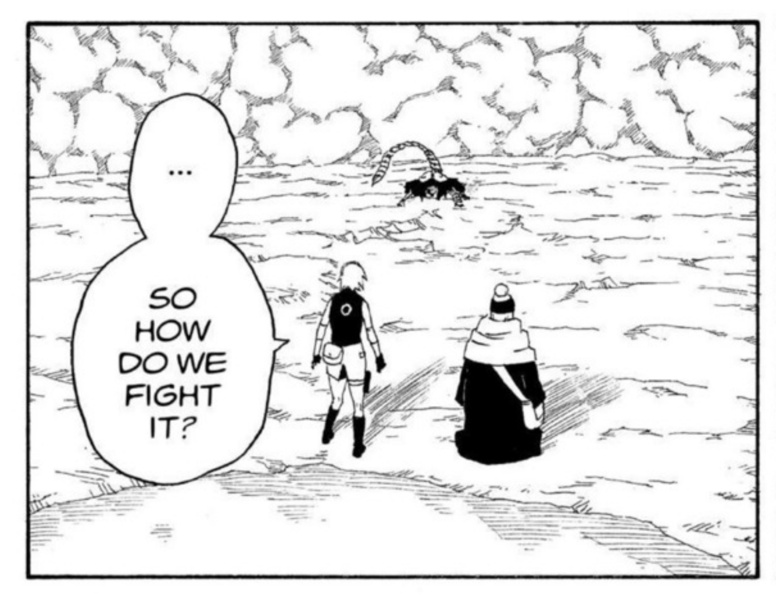

INDEED... THAT'S WHY AT FIRST I THOUGHT I COULD DEAL WITH HIM ON MY OWN.
BUT... IT SEEMS THAT WILL NOT BE THE CASE.


?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?


HIRUKO HAS CHANGED SOME-WHAT...
...SINCE I SAW IT LAST.


FOR ONE, THE SHELL DIDN'T LOOK LIKE THAT.
HE MUST HAVE HEIGHTENED ITS DEFENSES.
AND THE LEFT ARM... IT'S NEW TO ME.

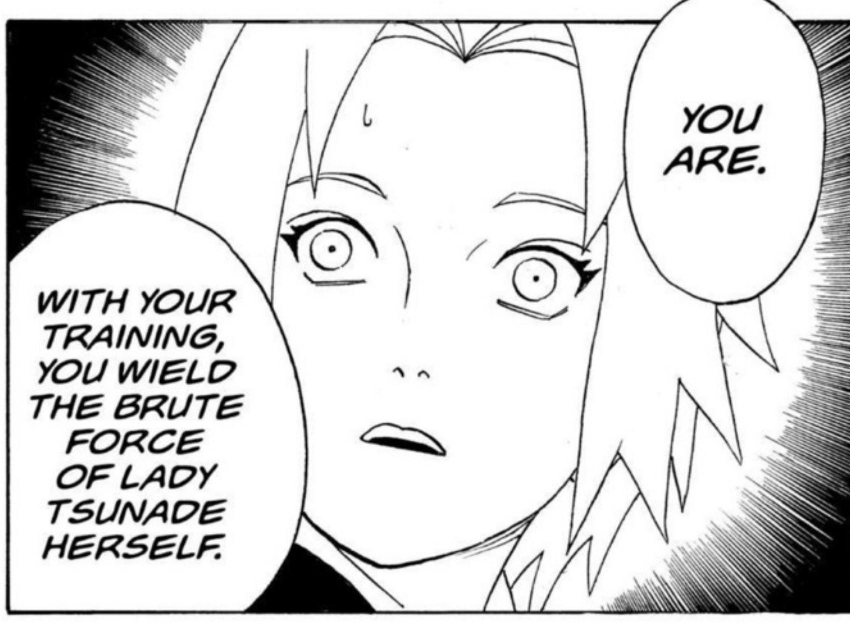

SO...
IF HE'S CHANGED THAT MUCH, THERE'S A CHANCE HE ALSO CHANGED ITS CRUCIAL HIDDEN MECHAN-ISMS.

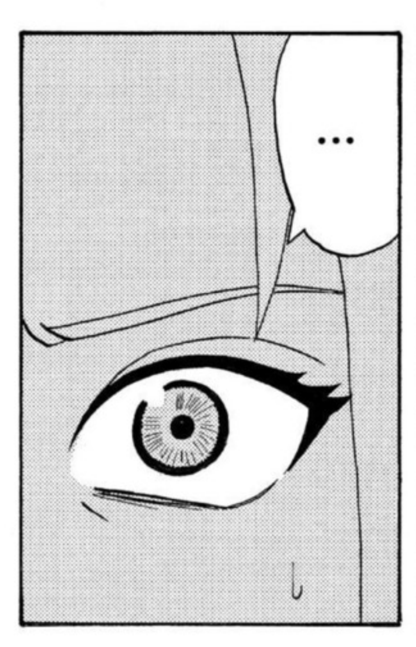

...
SO HOW DO WE FIGHT IT?


READ THIS WAY

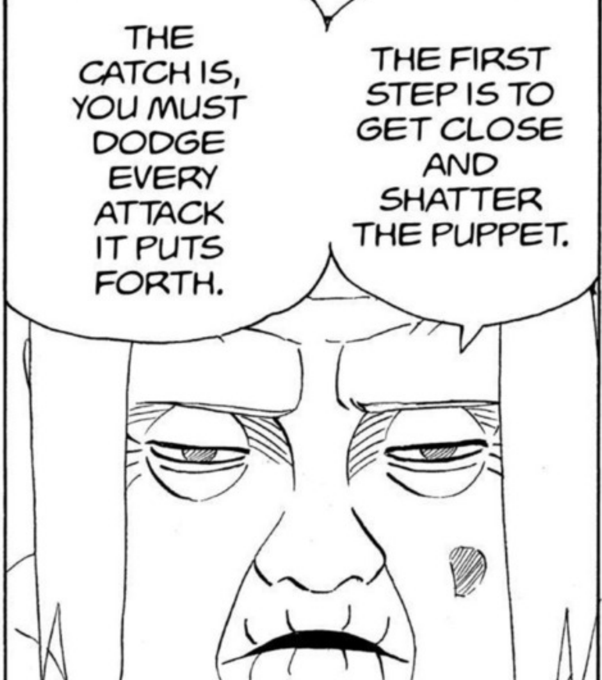

BEFORE WE TACKLE SASORI, WE MUST BREAK HIRUKO.
I CAN'T DESTROY IT ALONE.
I'M NOWHERE NEAR STRONG ENOUGH.


HOW-EVER...
SAKURA ...

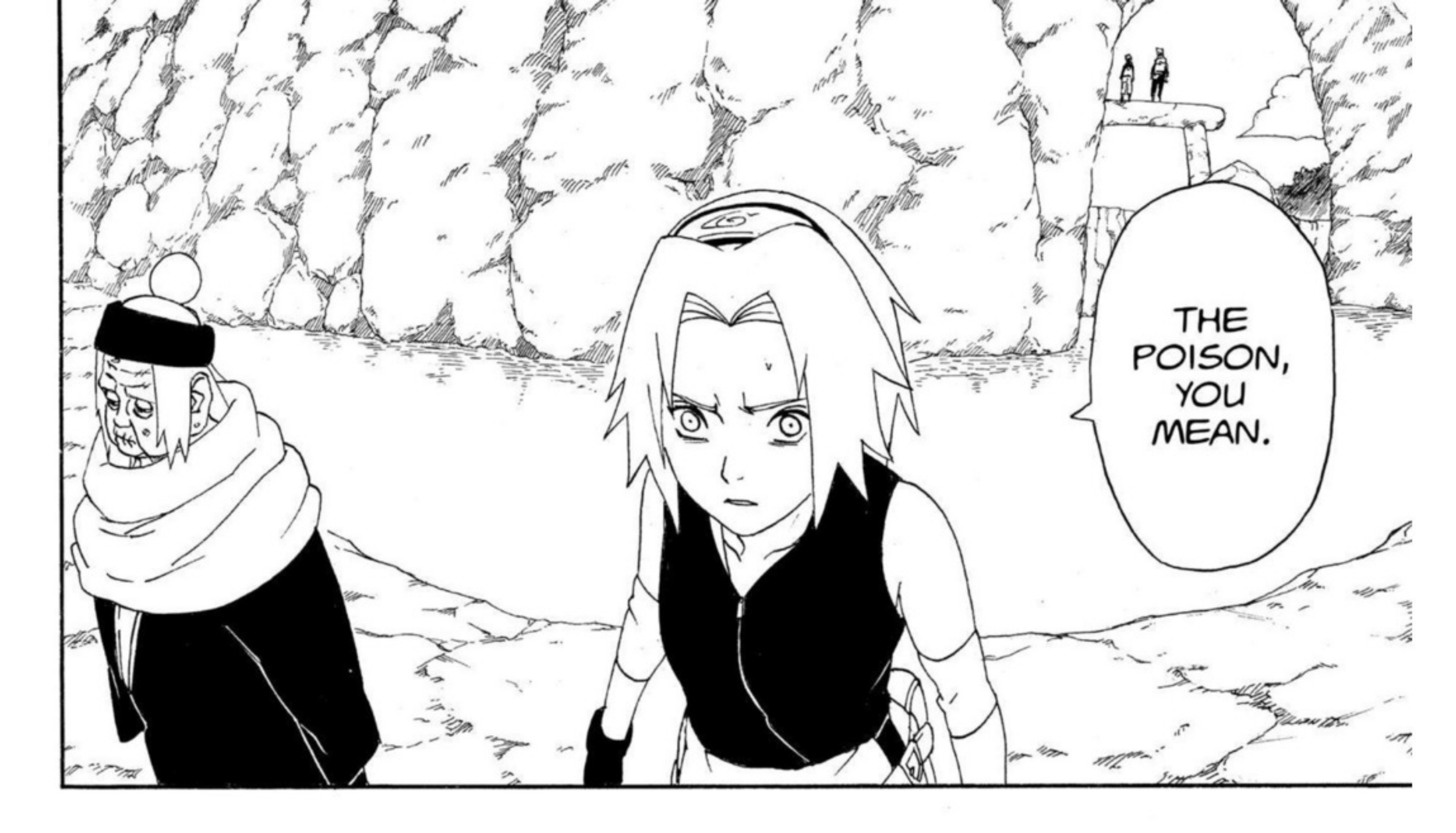

YOU ARE.
WITH YOUR TRAINING, YOU WIELD THE BRUTE FORCE OF LADY TSUNADE HERSELF.

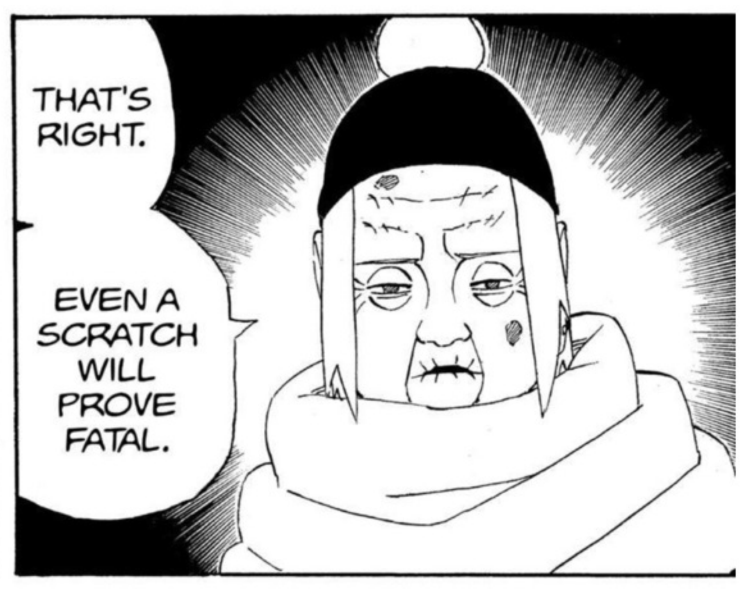

...


NOW, LISTEN CARE-FULLY.


THE FIRST STEP IS TO GET CLOSE AND SHATTER THE PUPPET.
THE CATCH IS, YOU MUST DODGE EVERY ATTACK IT PUTS FORTH.

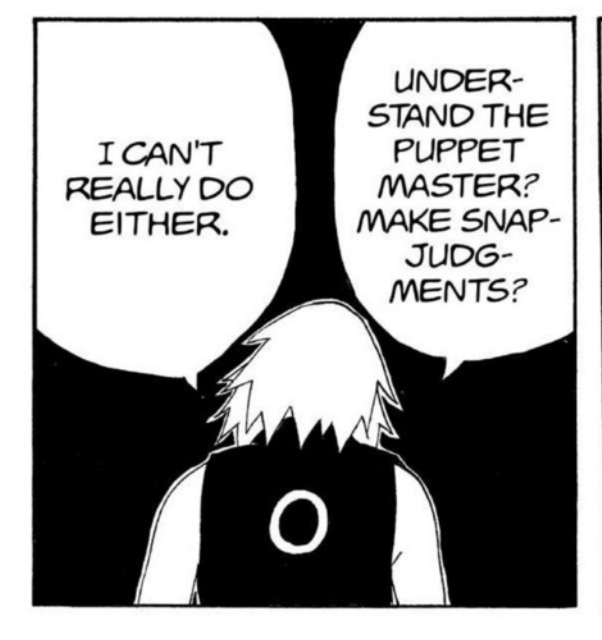

CLENCH


THE POISON, YOU MEAN.

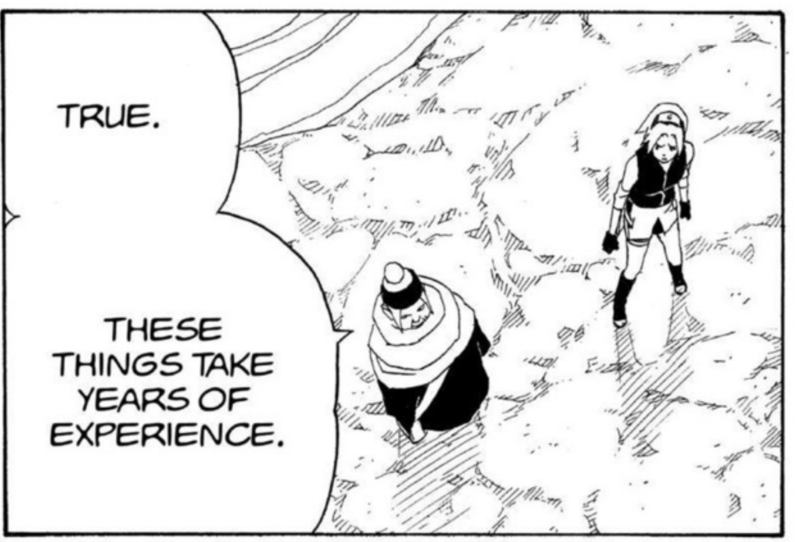

THAT'S RIGHT.
EVEN A SCRATCH WILL PROVE FATAL.




TO EVADE ATTACK ...
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THE PUPPET MASTER'S STYLE.
YOU MUST ANTICIPATE HIS MOVES INSTANTLY.


UNDER-STAND THE PUPPET MASTER? MAKE SNAP-JUDG-MENTS?
I CAN'T REALLY DO EITHER.


READ THIS WAY


TRUE.
THESE THINGS TAKE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.


THEN... HOW...?


I WONDER WHAT YOU SEE WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME.
A HELP-LESS OLD WOMAN?
OR...
SHFF


...


SHRUFF


...

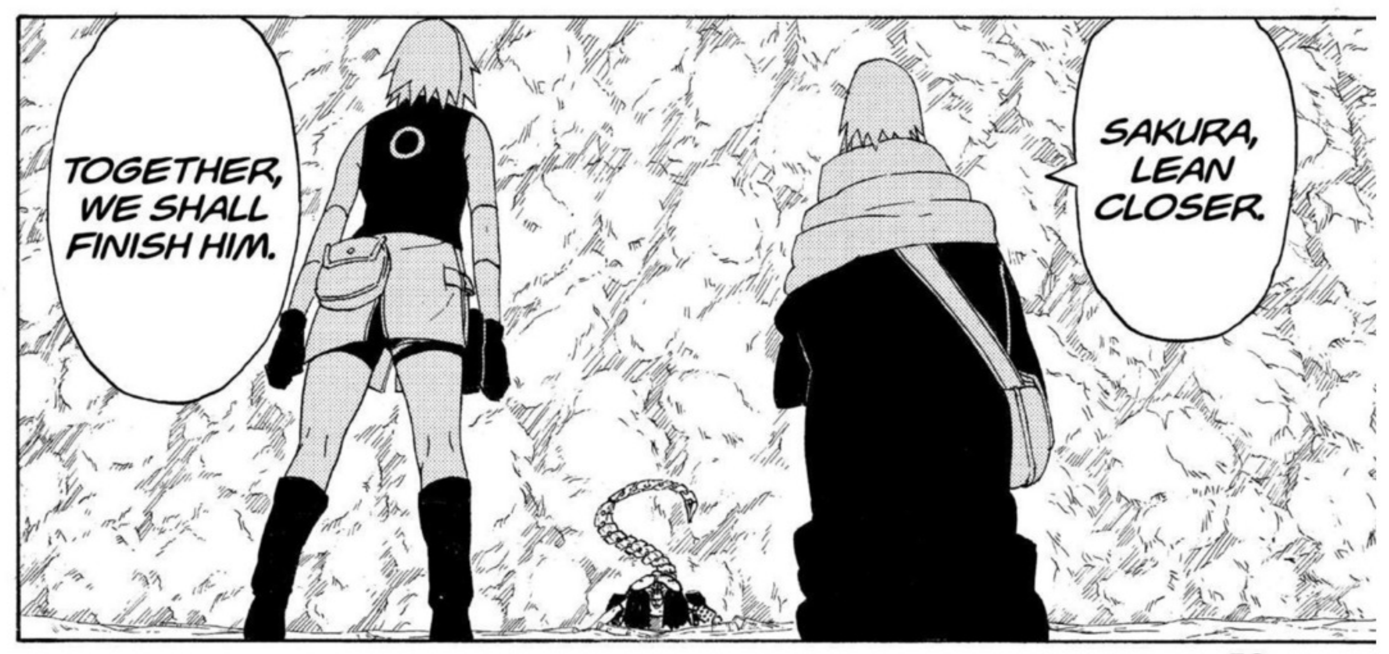
JUST COUNT ON ME... THAT'S WHY I'M HERE.

HIS EXPERIENCE DOESN'T EVEN COMPARE TO MINE.

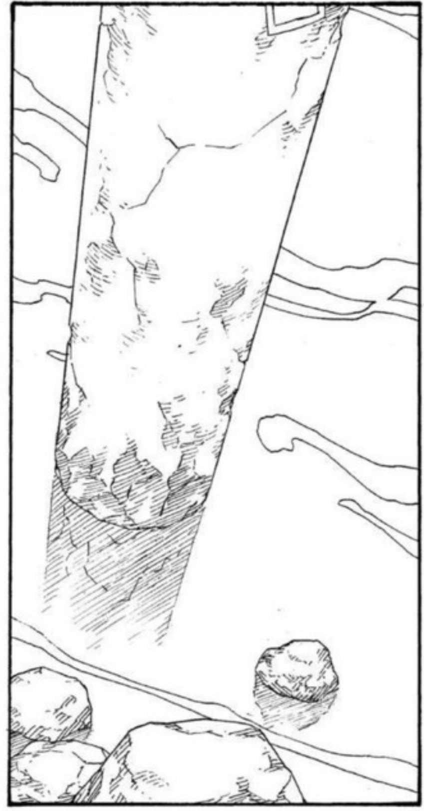
BESIDES ...

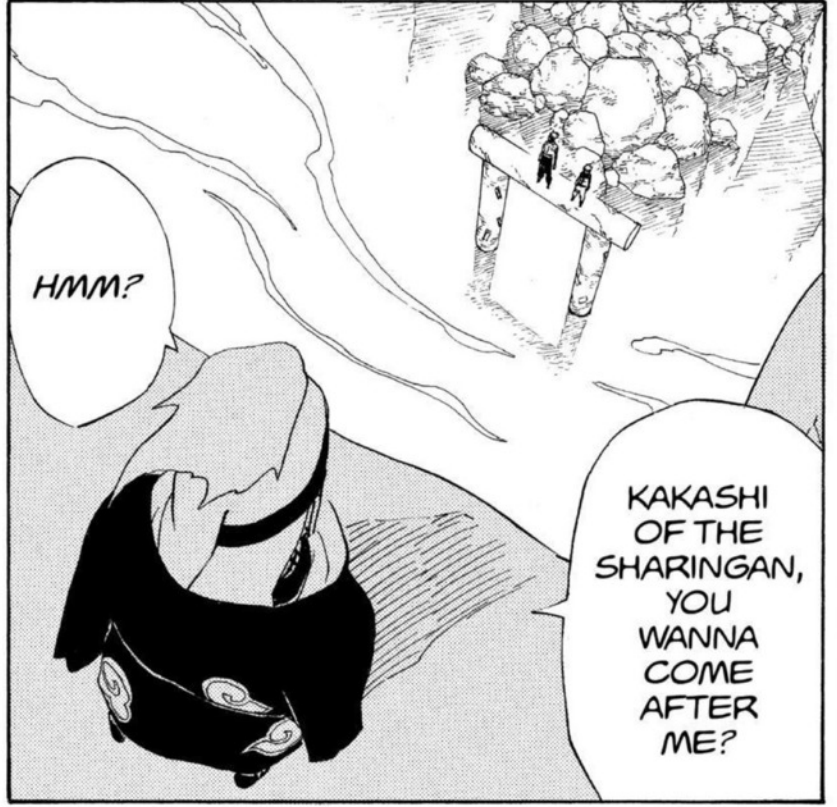
I'VE ALREADY MADE MY FIRST MOVE.

?!




READ
THIS
WAY



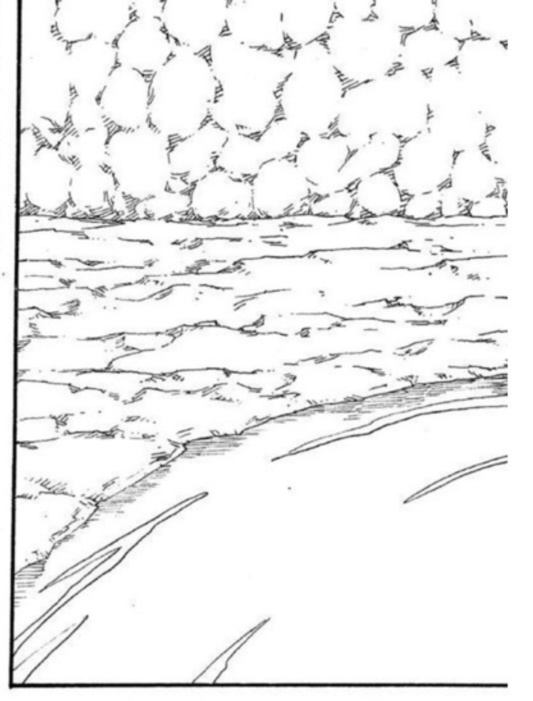
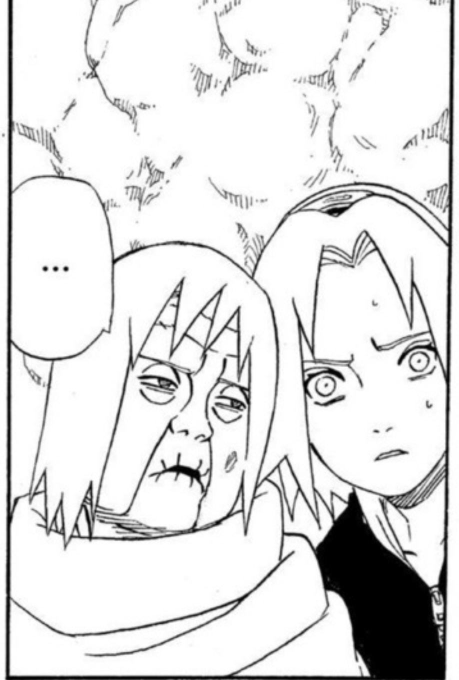
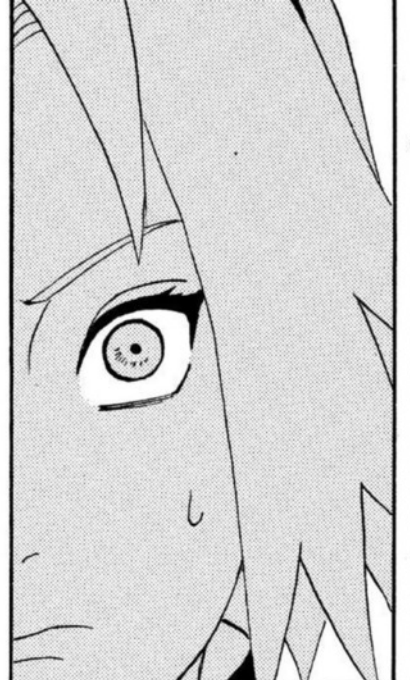
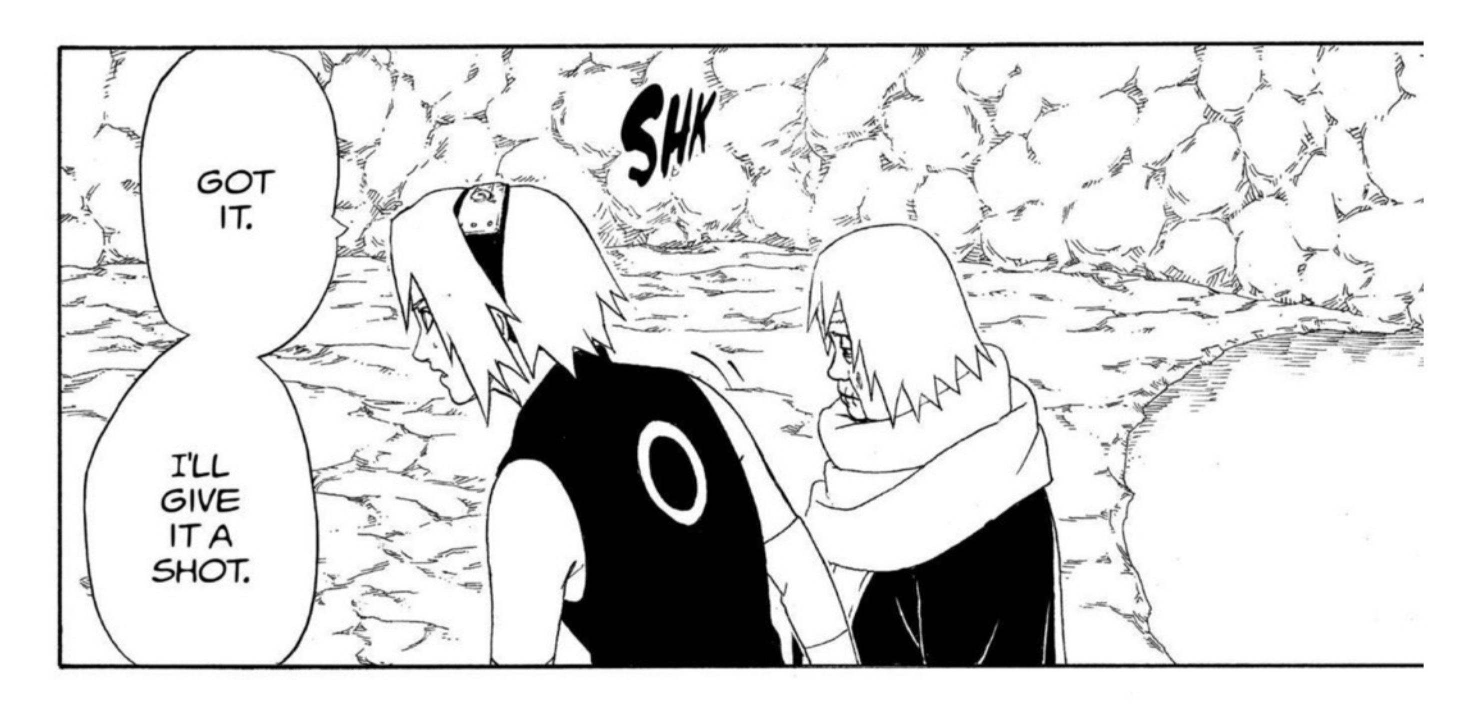

KAKASHI OF THE SHARINGAN, YOU WANNA COME AFTER ME?
HMM?


I'M SURE I SHOULDN'T SAY THIS, BUT...
SASORI IS STRONGER THAN I... PROBABLY... YEAH.


...


MASTER, PLEASE GO HELP SAKURA.
I'LL RESCUE GAARA.


HMPH.



...


SHK
GOT IT.
I'LL GIVE IT A SHOT.

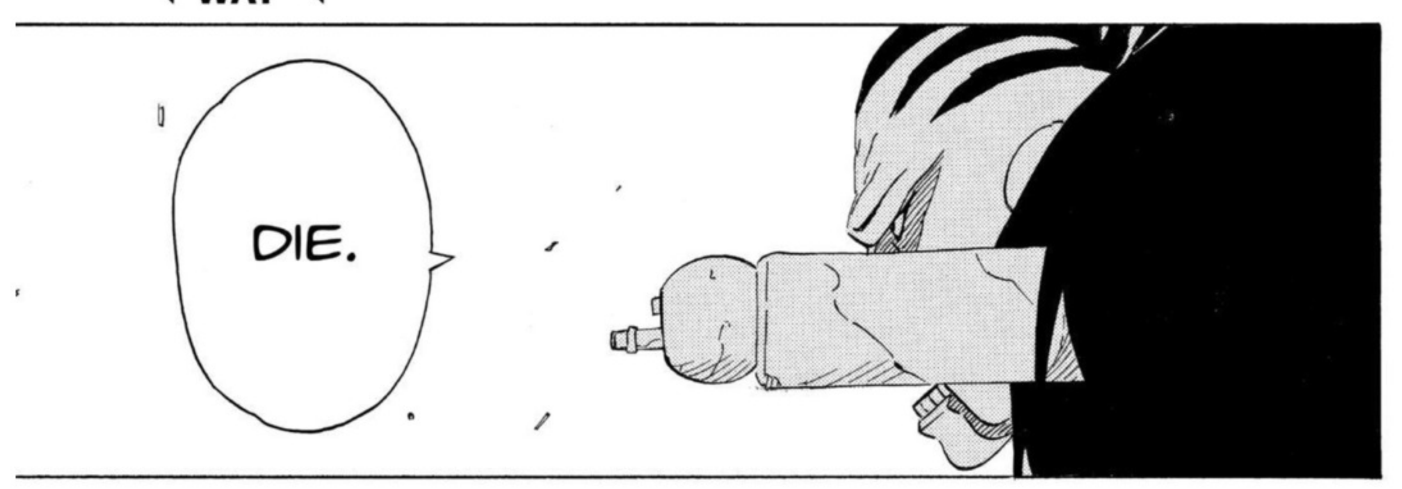
ARE WE ALL READY?
I HATE WAITING. YOU MUST KNOW THAT.
SHF

DON'T WORRY... WE'LL WASTE NO TIME...
...IN KILLING YOU!


FWOO
SH
HMPH.
SPONG
!
!
PAKKA-KAKKA
KAKKA

SK
SSH
KRIK
KRIK
KRIK
WSH
WSH
KRIK
WSH
KRIK
FWSSH
!
!

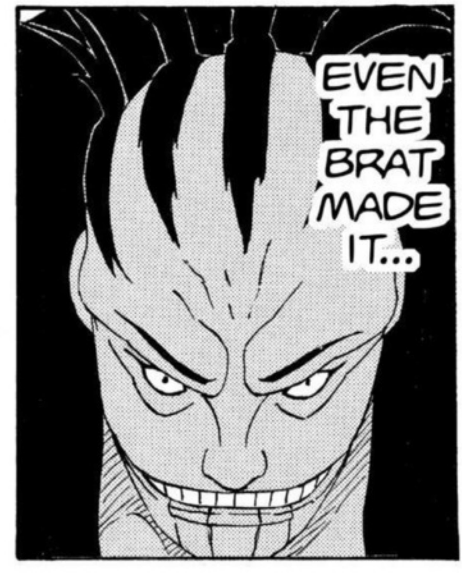


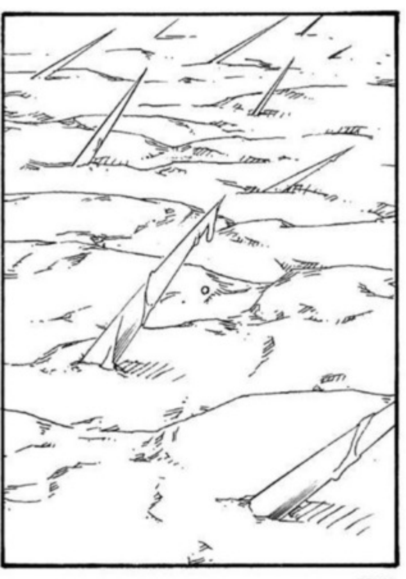
SHA-KA-KA-KA-KA






EVEN THE BRAT MADE IT...


...!





FOOSH

BUT HOW...?

FWSSH

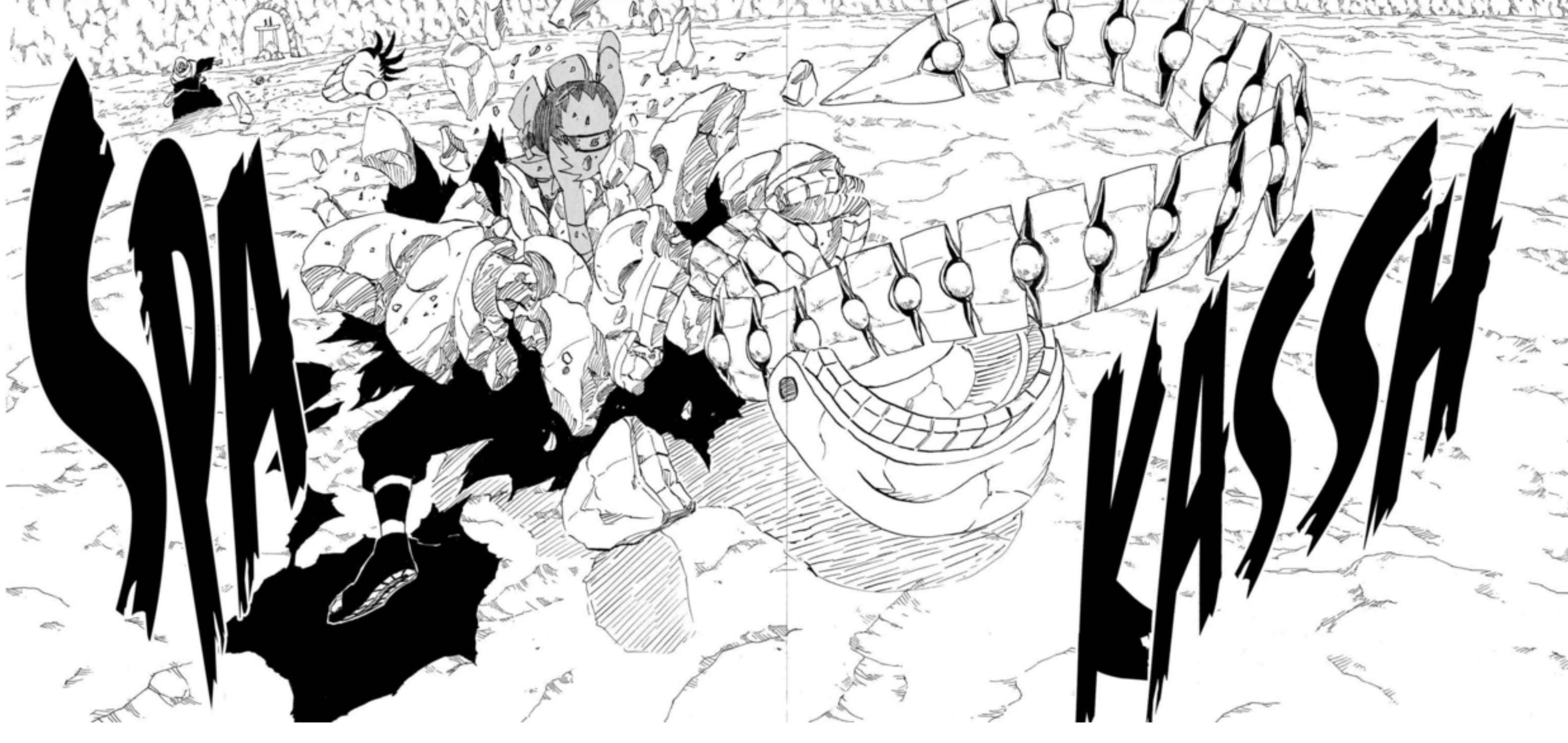
CHOK

!!

OF COURSE! THE OLD BAG...



SAKURA, NOW!
STRIKE IT DOWN!!
YES!!



SPA
KASSH




Number 266: Sasori Revealed...!!

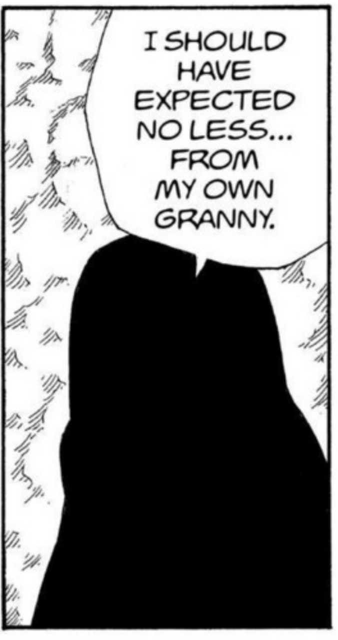

RAK
RAK
RAK
KRAK
!
...
FSSH
!


READ
THIS
WAY

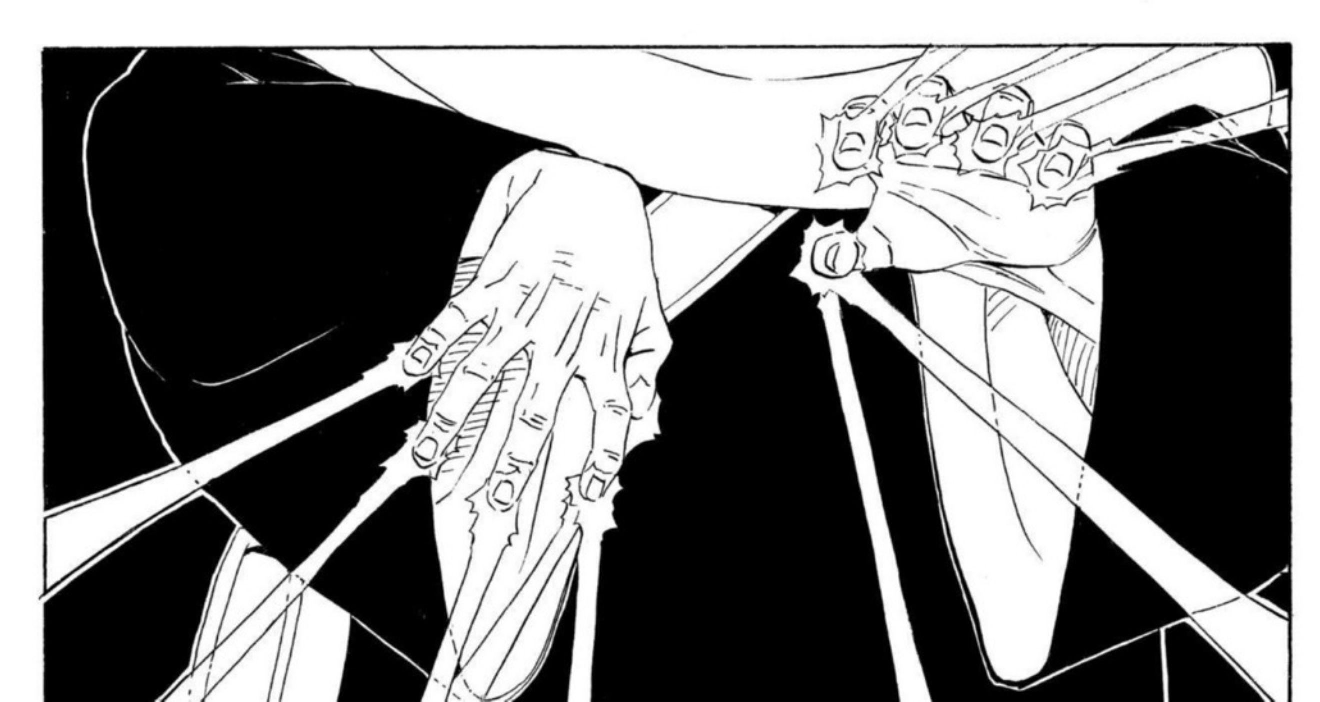

SKRRT

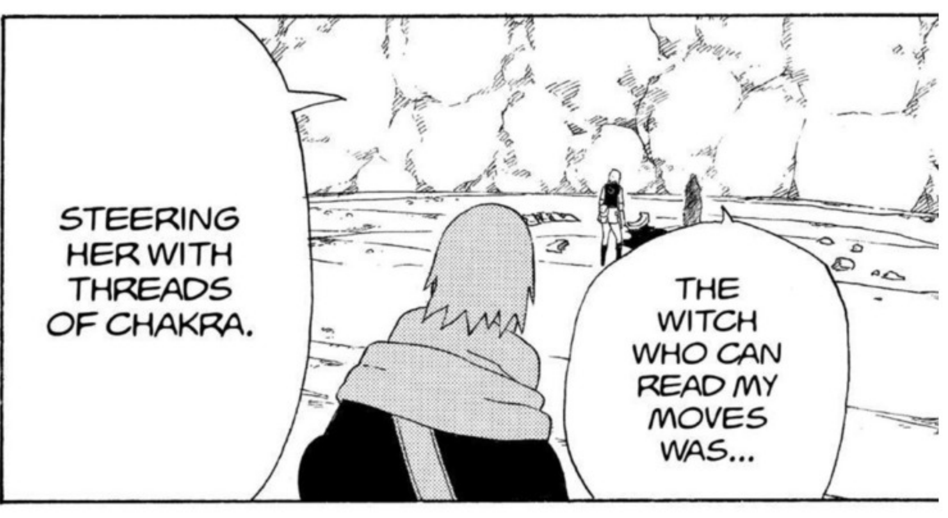

WHUM


...?!
THAT'S HIS REAL BODY?!


I SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED NO LESS... FROM MY OWN GRANNY.


NO WONDER EVEN THE KID...
...COULD DODGE MY ATTACK.




THE WITCH WHO CAN READ MY MOVES WAS...
STEERING HER WITH THREADS OF CHAKRA.

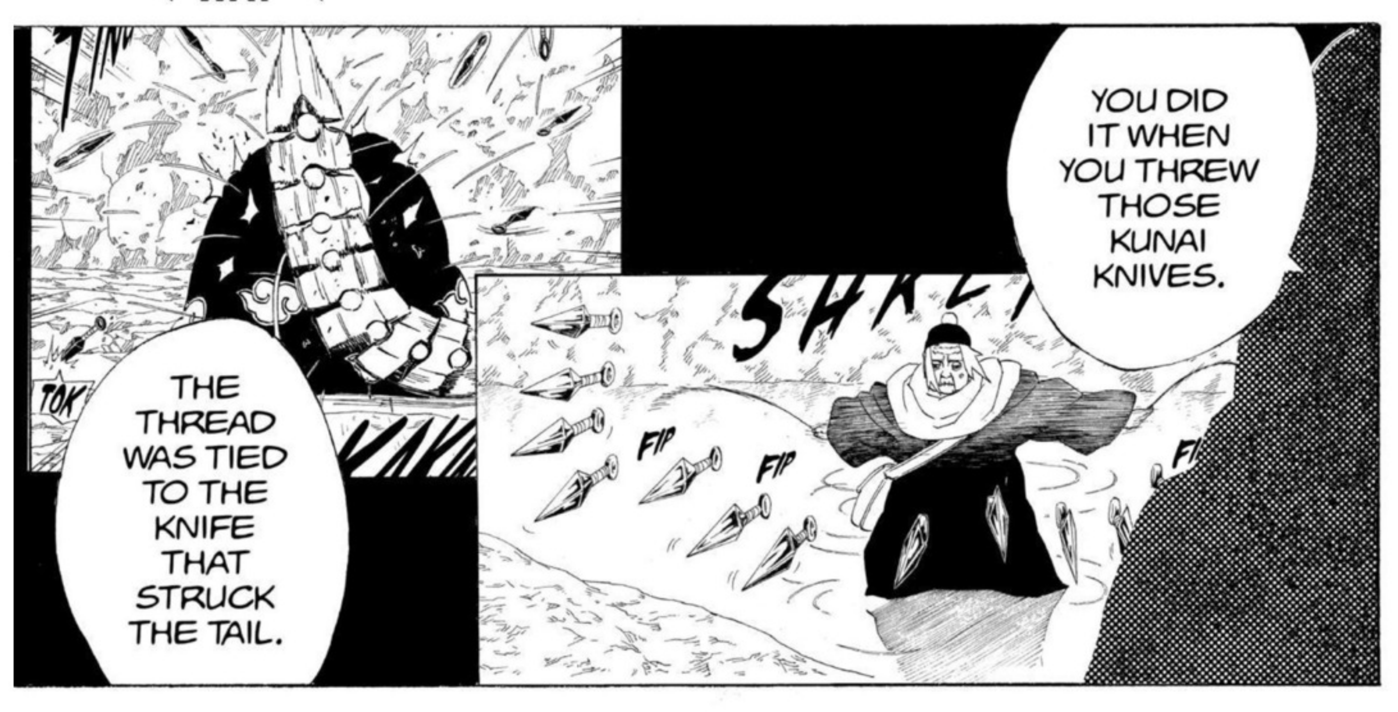

THE CAT IS OUT OF THE BAG.

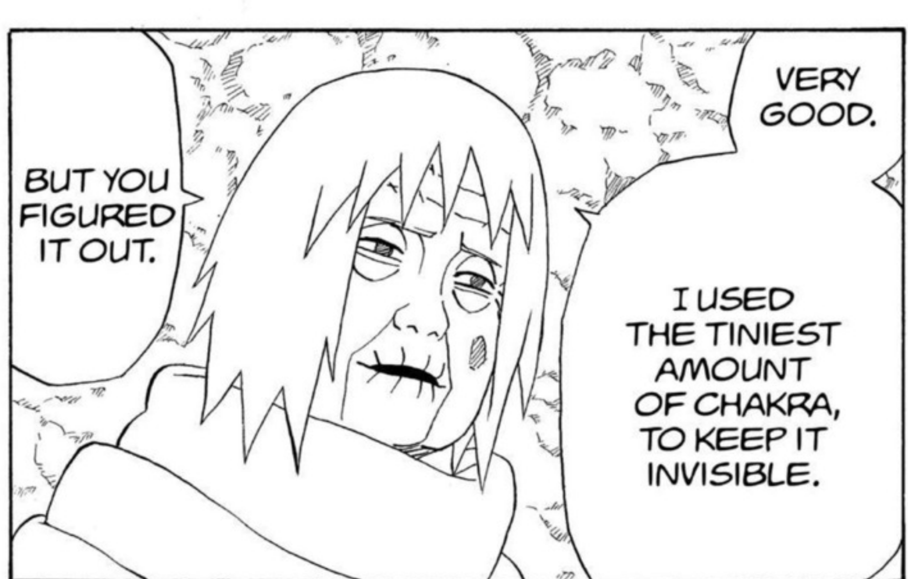

AND MORE-OVER...

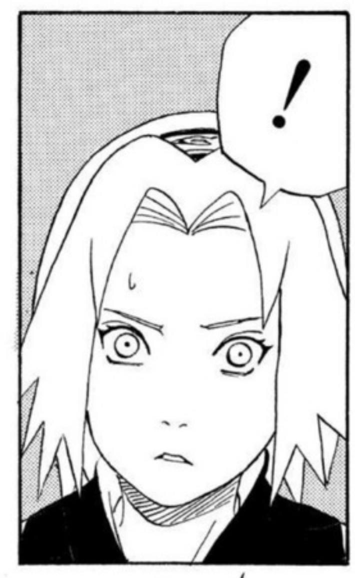

YOU TOOK CONTROL OF HIRUKO'S TAIL WHILE YOU WERE AT IT.


CHOK
I NOTICED ONLY WHEN THE TAIL STALLED ON ME.


READ
THIS
WAY


YOU DID IT WHEN YOU THREW THOSE KUNAI KNIVES.
SHRE
FIP
FIP
FI
THE THREAD WAS TIED TO THE KNIFE THAT STRUCK THE TAIL.
TOK

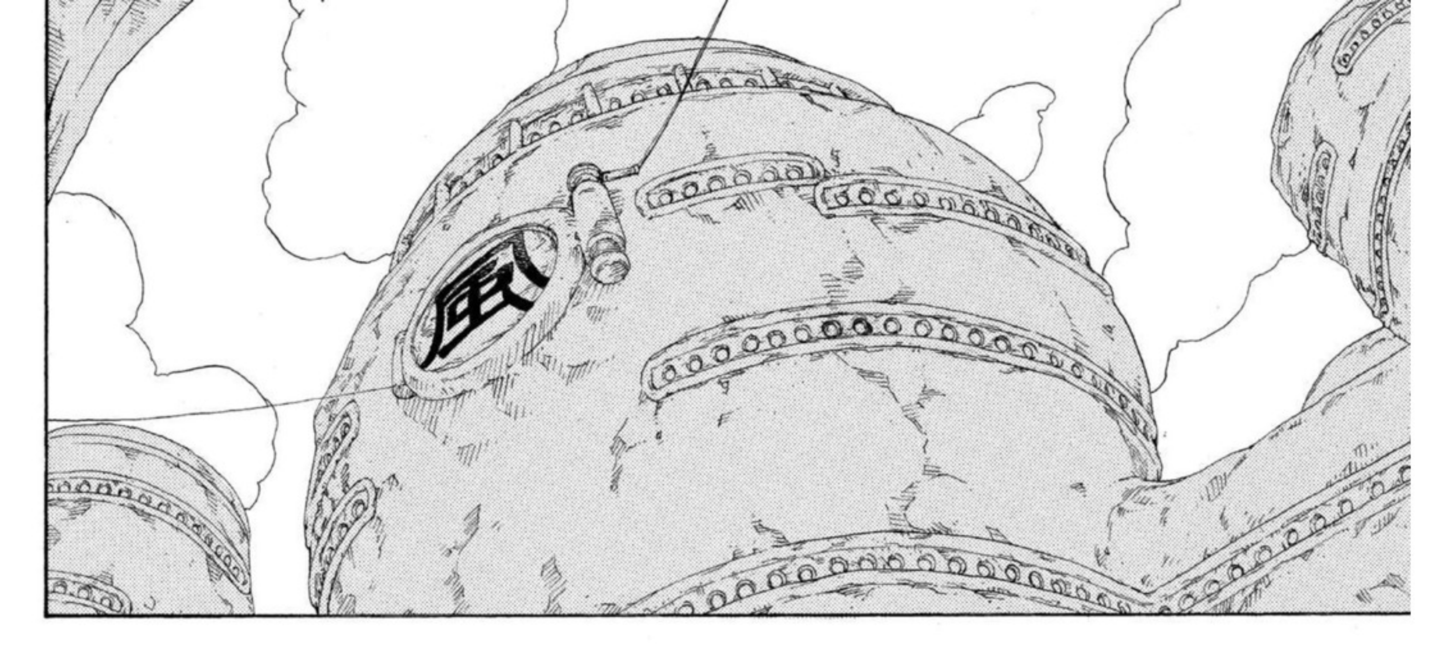

VERY GOOD.
I USED THE TINIEST AMOUNT OF CHAKRA, TO KEEP IT INVISIBLE.
BUT YOU FIGURED IT OUT.

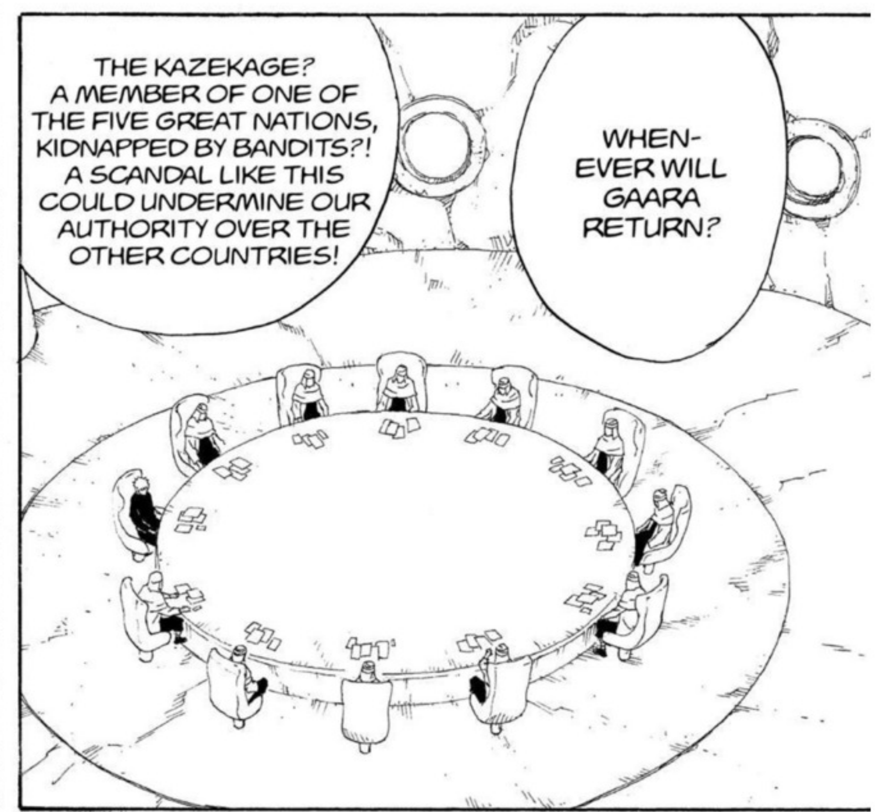

!

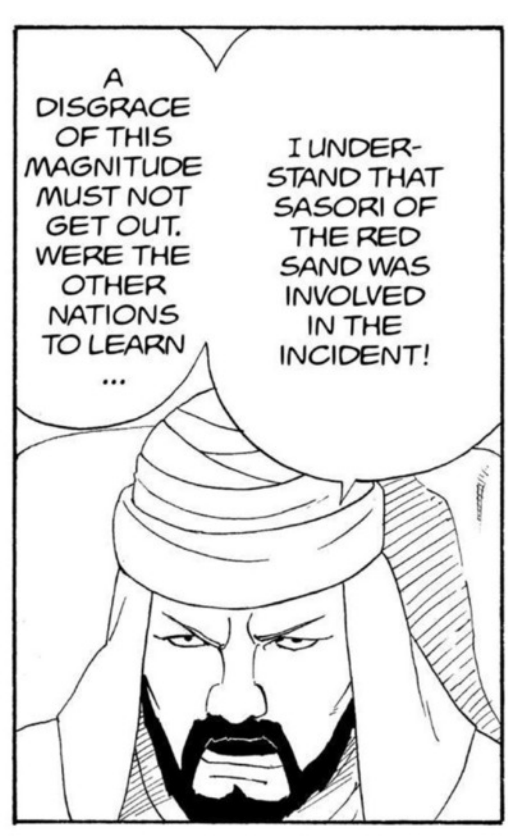

BUT OF COURSE.
IT WAS YOU.
CHIFF
REMEMBER WHO TAUGHT ME HOW TO PLAY WITH PUPPETS? WHO DRILLED THE TALENT INTO ME?


INDEED ...
BUT ANYWAY... PLAY-TIME IS OVER.

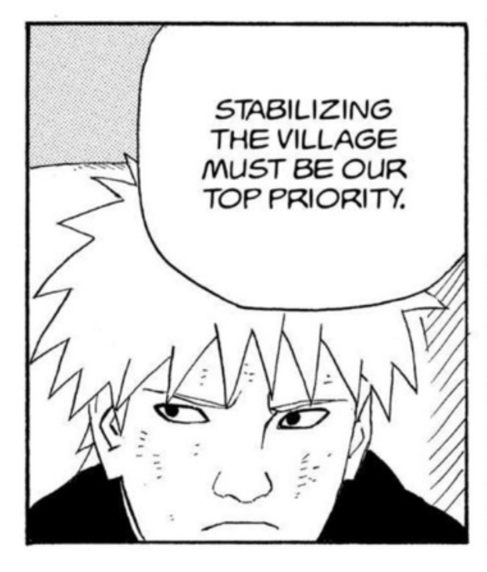

FLU
PP




WHEN-EVER WILL GAARA RETURN?
THE KAZEKAGE? A MEMBER OF ONE OF THE FIVE GREAT NATIONS, KIDNAPPED BY BANDITS?! A SCANDAL LIKE THIS COULD UNDERMINE OUR AUTHORITY OVER THE OTHER COUNTRIES!


I UNDER-STAND THAT SASORI OF THE RED SAND WAS INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT!
A DISGRACE OF THIS MAGNITUDE MUST NOT GET OUT. WERE THE OTHER NATIONS TO LEARN ...


TRUE. ONCE THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES LEARN THAT THE KAZEKAGE IS MISSING...
WHO KNOWS WHEN OR HOW THEY'LL START BUTTING IN.
I PROPOSE WE ELECT A NEW KAZEKAGE IMMEDIATELY.

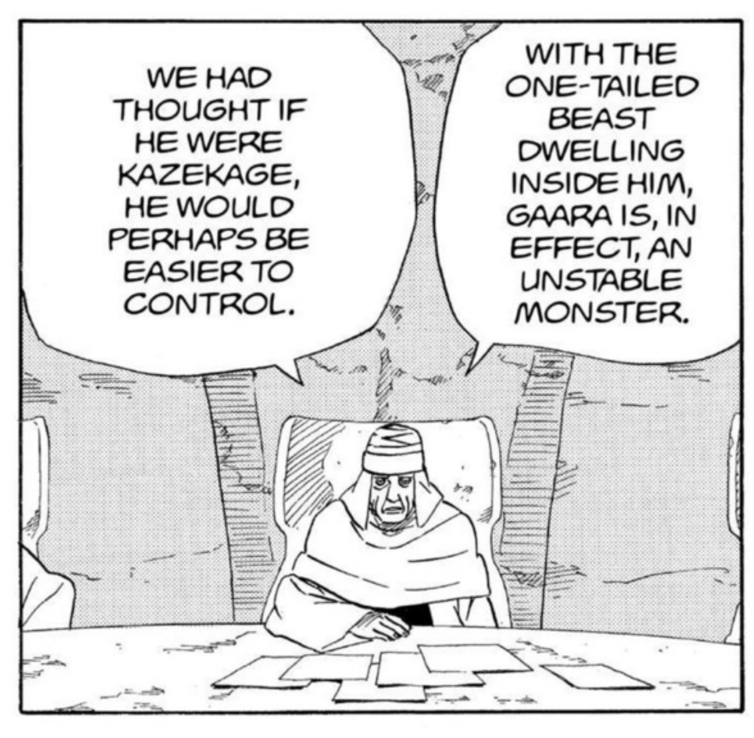

STABILIZING THE VILLAGE MUST BE OUR TOP PRIORITY.


READ THIS WAY

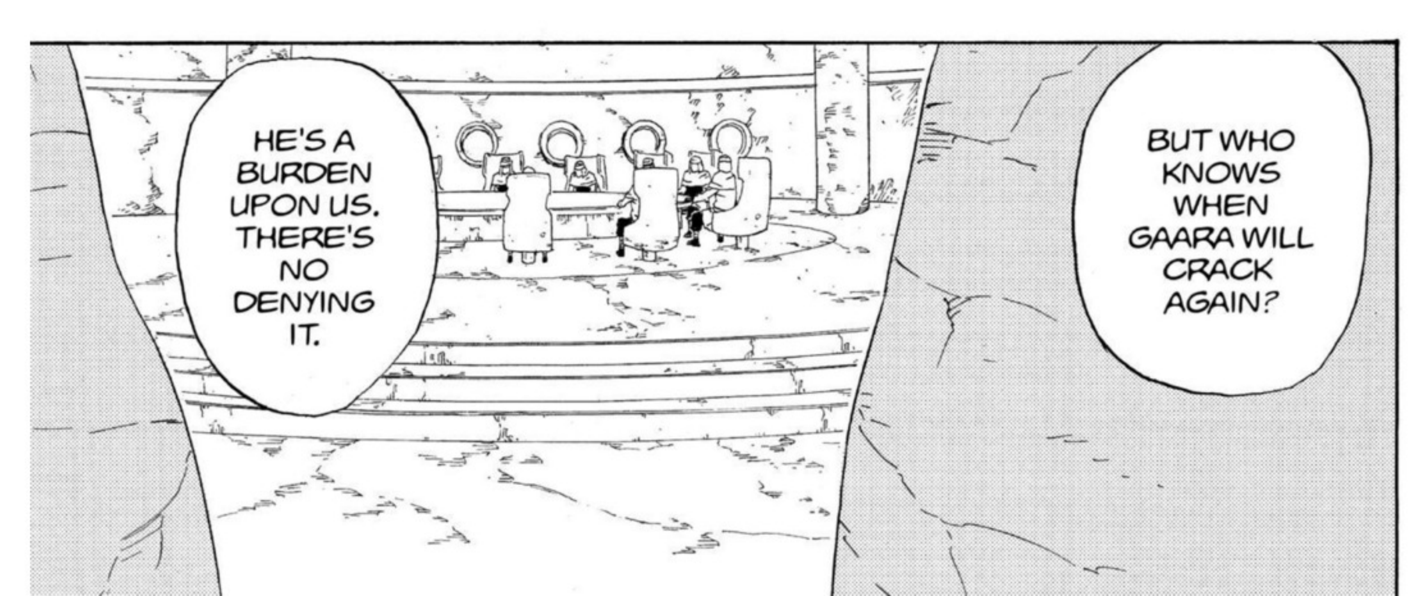

GAARA MAY YET RETURN! WE DON'T KNOW THAT HE'S GONE FOREVER.


...
WELL... THE FACT IS, IT WOULD...
...BE BETTER FOR THE VILLAGE WERE HE NEVER TO RETURN.


!
TWIK


WITH THE ONE-TAILED BEAST DWELLING INSIDE HIM, GAARA IS, IN EFFECT, AN UNSTABLE MONSTER.
WE HAD THOUGHT IF HE WERE KAZEKAGE, HE WOULD PERHAPS BE EASIER TO CONTROL.

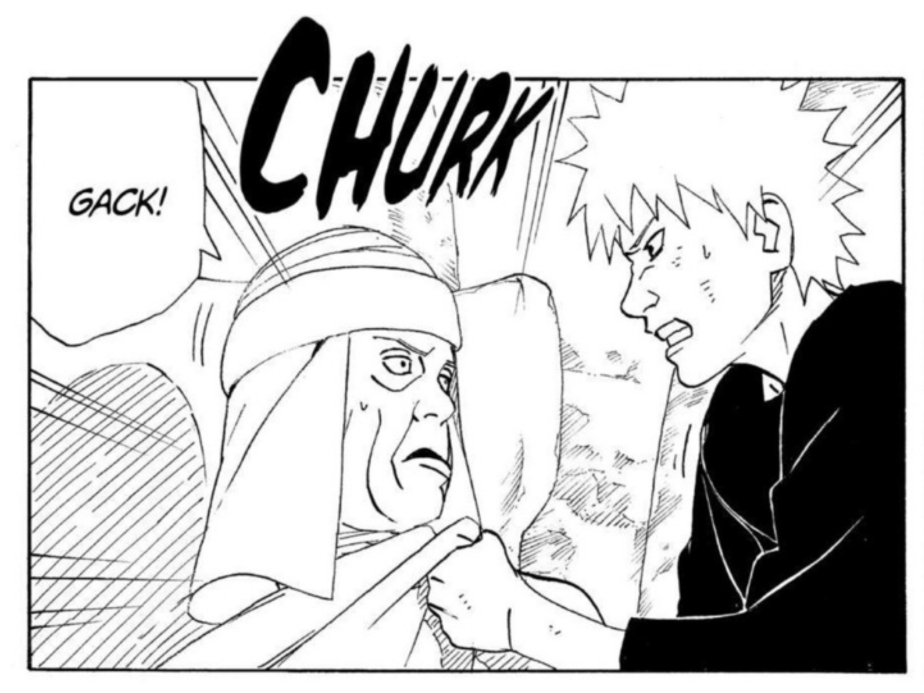

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

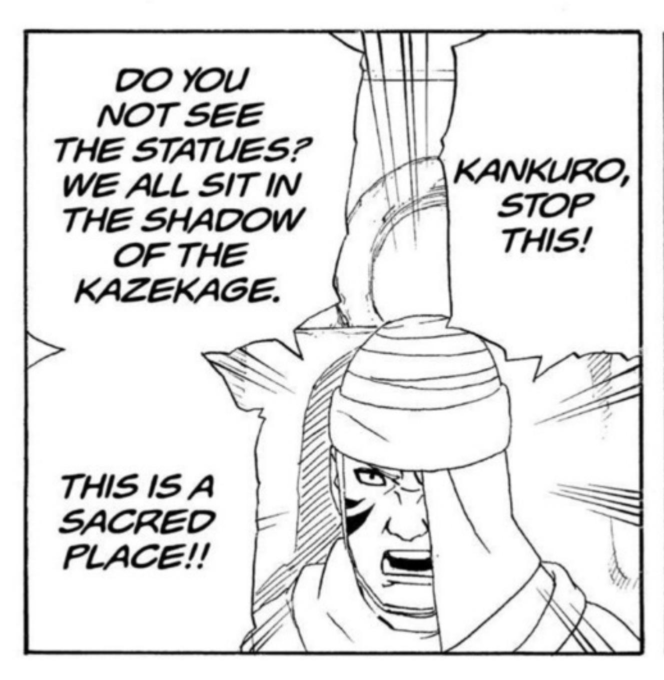

BUT WHO KNOWS WHEN GAARA WILL CRACK AGAIN?
HE'S A BURDEN UPON US. THERE'S NO DENYING IT.

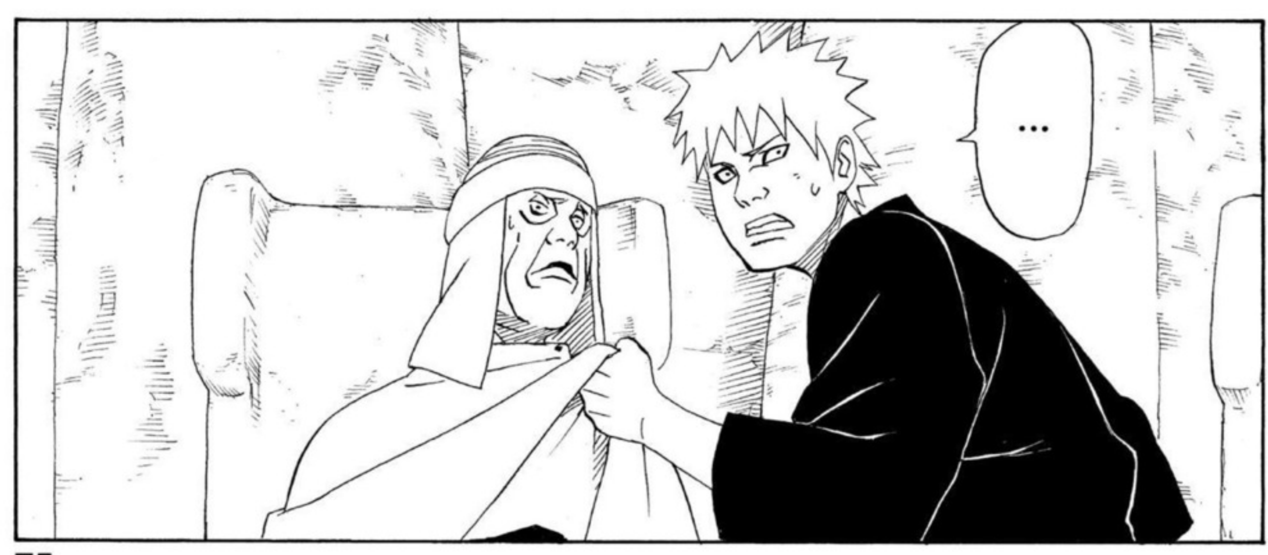
GAARA MAY HAVE ADHERED WELL ENOUGH TO SHUKAKU...
BUT HE IS FAR FROM PERFECT. HE'S AN UNSTABLE GUINEA PIG.
A FAILED TEST CASE THAT EVEN HIS FATHER, THE FOURTH KAZEKAGE, ORDERED DESTROYED.

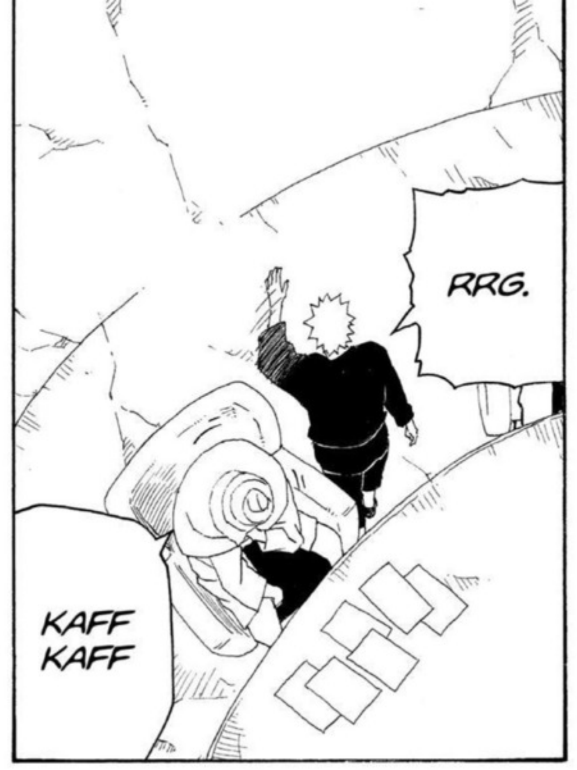




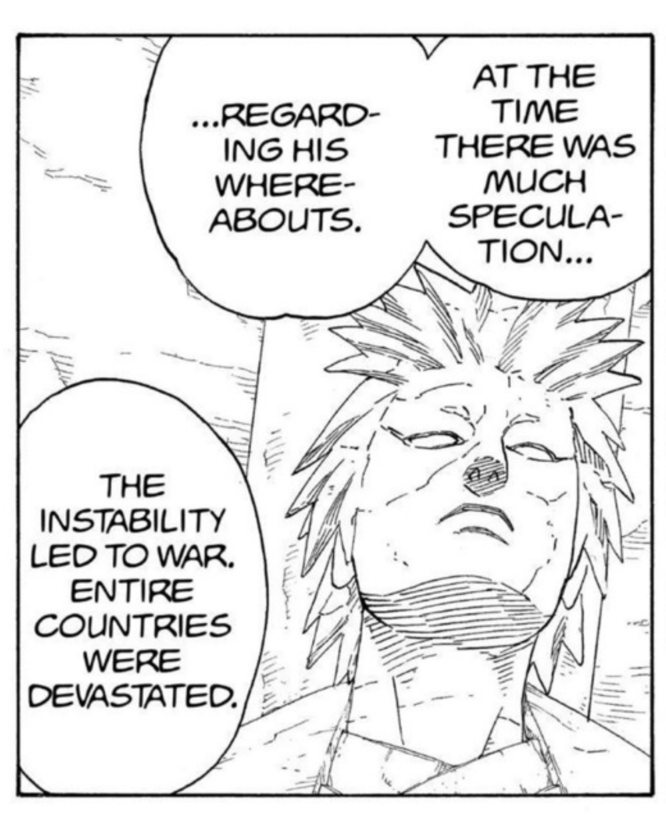
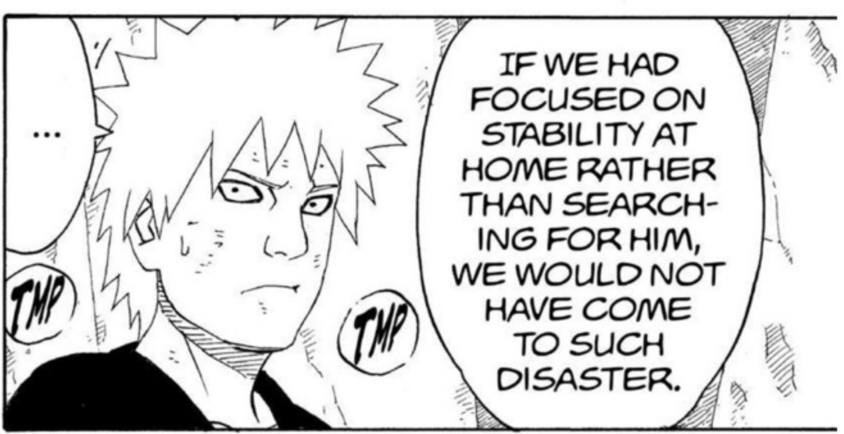

CHURK
GACK!

!

DO YOU NOT SEE THE STATUES? WE ALL SIT IN THE SHADOW OF THE KAZEKAGE.
KANKURO, STOP THIS!
THIS IS A SACRED PLACE!!

SENIOR OFFICER OR NOT, I'M NOT GOING TO SIT AND LISTEN TO THIS.
YOU'D BETTER FIX THAT LEAKY SEWER PIPE OF A MOUTH.

...


RRG.
KAFF KAFF

KANKURO... I UNDERSTAND YOUR INDIGNATION, BUT HE HAS A POINT.
IT'S JUST THAT... THE ISSUE ISN'T WHETHER OR NOT WE CAN TRUST GAARA.

WE HAVE FACED A SIMILAR SITUATION BEFORE.
THE THIRD KAZEKAGE WAS ALSO KIDNAPPED.

AT THE TIME THERE WAS MUCH SPECULATION...
...REGARDING HIS WHEREABOUTS.
THE INSTABILITY LED TO WAR. ENTIRE COUNTRIES WERE DEVASTATED.

IF WE HAD FOCUSED ON STABILITY AT HOME RATHER THAN SEARCHING FOR HIM, WE WOULD NOT HAVE COME TO SUCH DISASTER.
...
TMP
TMP

SO WHY DIDN'T YOU?









THAT SUCH A STRONG MAN COULD BE KILLED SO EASILY...

...NO ONE BELIEVED IT POSSIBLE.

IN ANY CASE... RIGHT NOW, OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY MUST BE THE VILLAGE.



SWOOP
SPLAK
BOOF
WHOOSH
SHF


FSH
CH OK
YEEAAAGH!
KA BLAM
SPIT
TINK

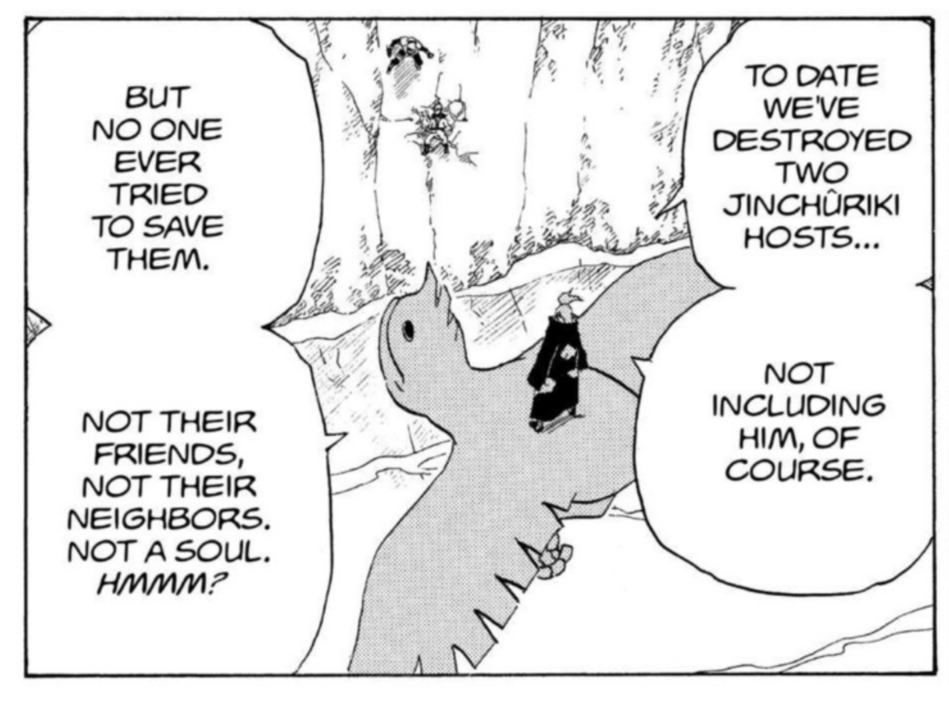

TAK


PUK
PUK
YOU'RE NOT TAKING GAARA!!

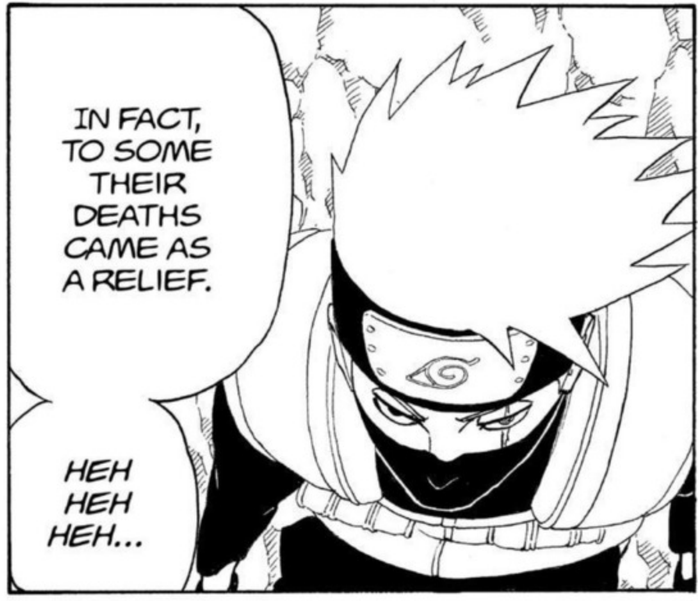

YOU ARE QUITE THE ODDBALL.
A JINCHÛRIKI HOST IS SUPPOSED TO BE SULLEN AND MISAN-THROPIC... *HMMM?*


AND THIS GAARA IS NO LESS STRANGE.
I'VE NEVER SEEN A HOST SO BELOVED AS HE.



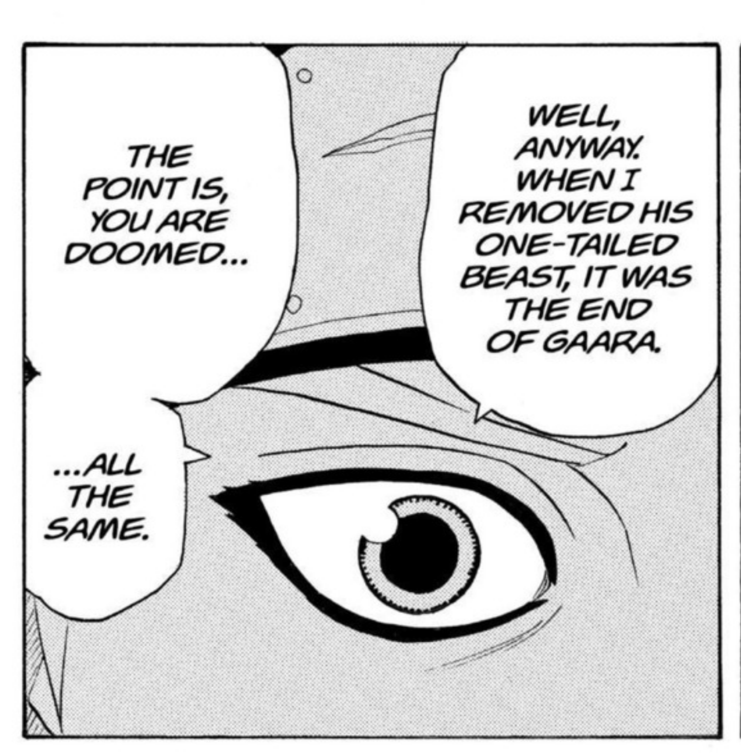

TO DATE WE'VE DESTROYED TWO JINCHÛRIKI HOSTS...
NOT INCLUDING HIM, OF COURSE.
BUT NO ONE EVER TRIED TO SAVE THEM.
NOT THEIR FRIENDS, NOT THEIR NEIGHBORS. NOT A SOUL. *HMMM?*


READ THIS WAY


IN FACT, TO SOME THEIR DEATHS CAME AS A RELIEF.
HEH HEH HEH...


...
FWOOP


PERHAPS YOU CAN'T IGNORE ONE OF YOUR OWN KIND?
YOU FEEL TOO CONNECTED TO THIS PATHETIC CREATURE? HMMM?

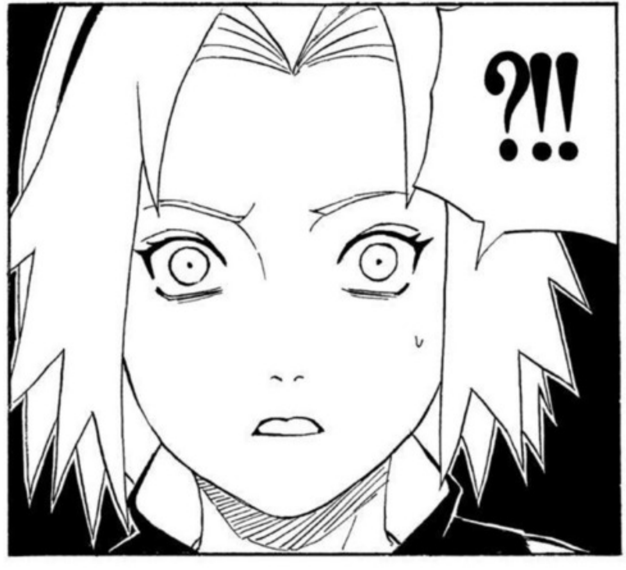

WELL, ANYWAY. WHEN I REMOVED HIS ONE-TAILED BEAST, IT WAS THE END OF GAARA.
THE POINT IS, YOU ARE DOOMED...
...ALL THE SAME.

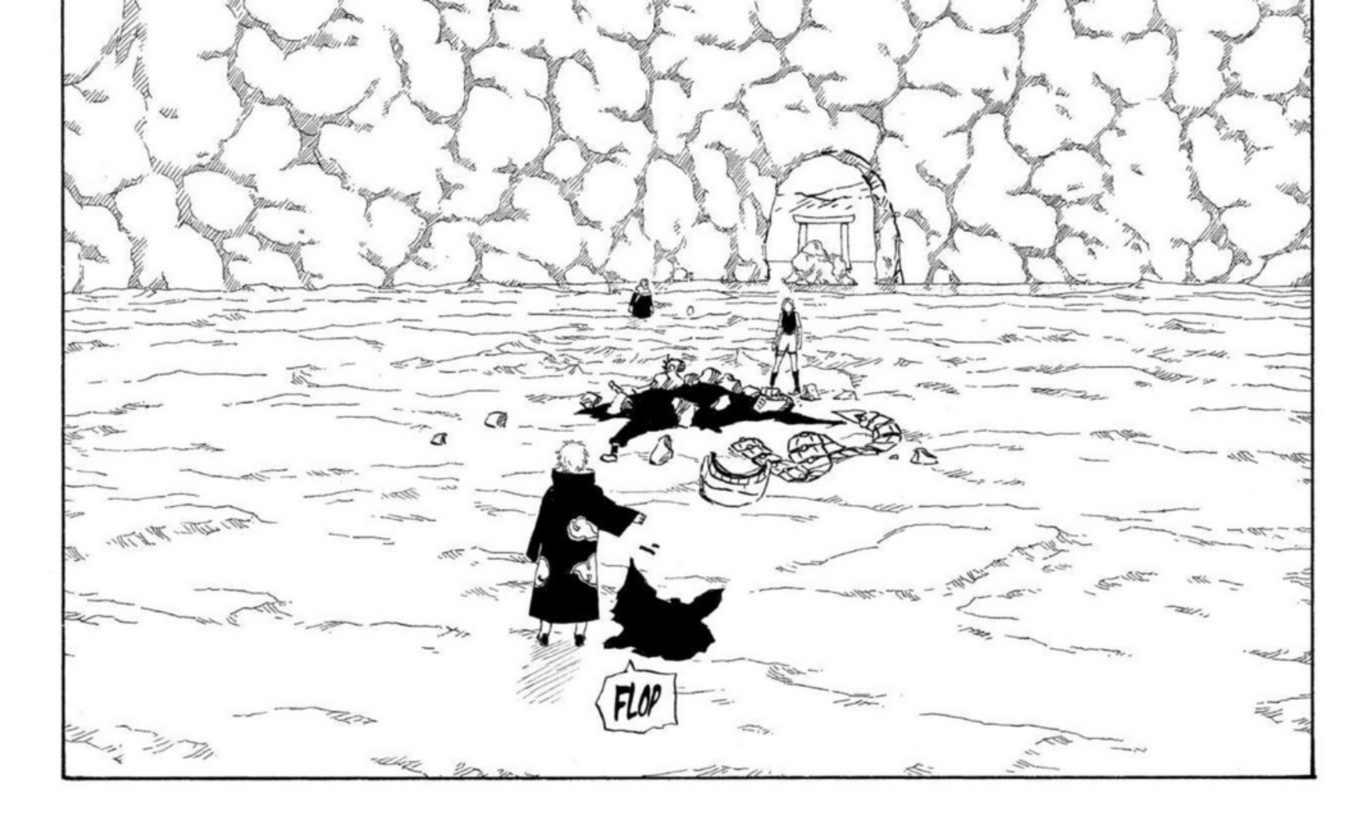

...
YOU FILTH...
YOU'RE ALL DEAD.

SO... YOU STILL THINK THIS'LL BE EASY?

GRANNY CHIYO?






FLOP


GRANNY CHIYO? THIS IS...
SA-SORI?


...
WHAT IS HAPPEN-ING?


ALL THESE YEARS... AND NOT A DAY ON HIM.


SHF


LET ME SHOW YOU MY FAVORITE.
YOU KNOW, THIS ONE WAS HARD TO FINISH.
FLIP

BUT THAT'S WHAT MAKES ME SO FOND OF HIM.

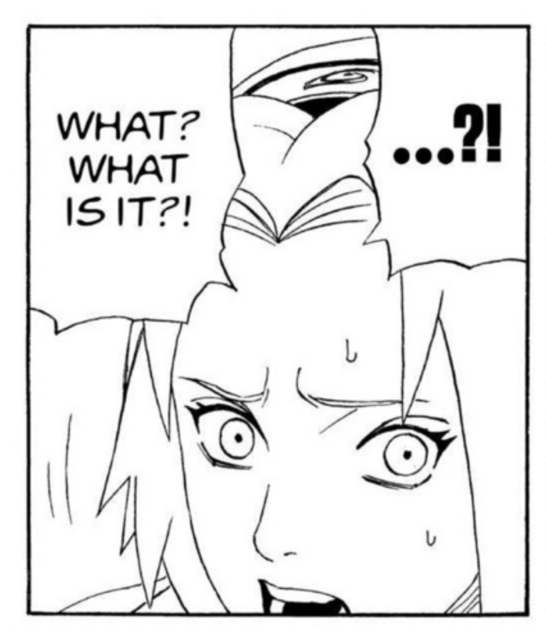
BO

OF







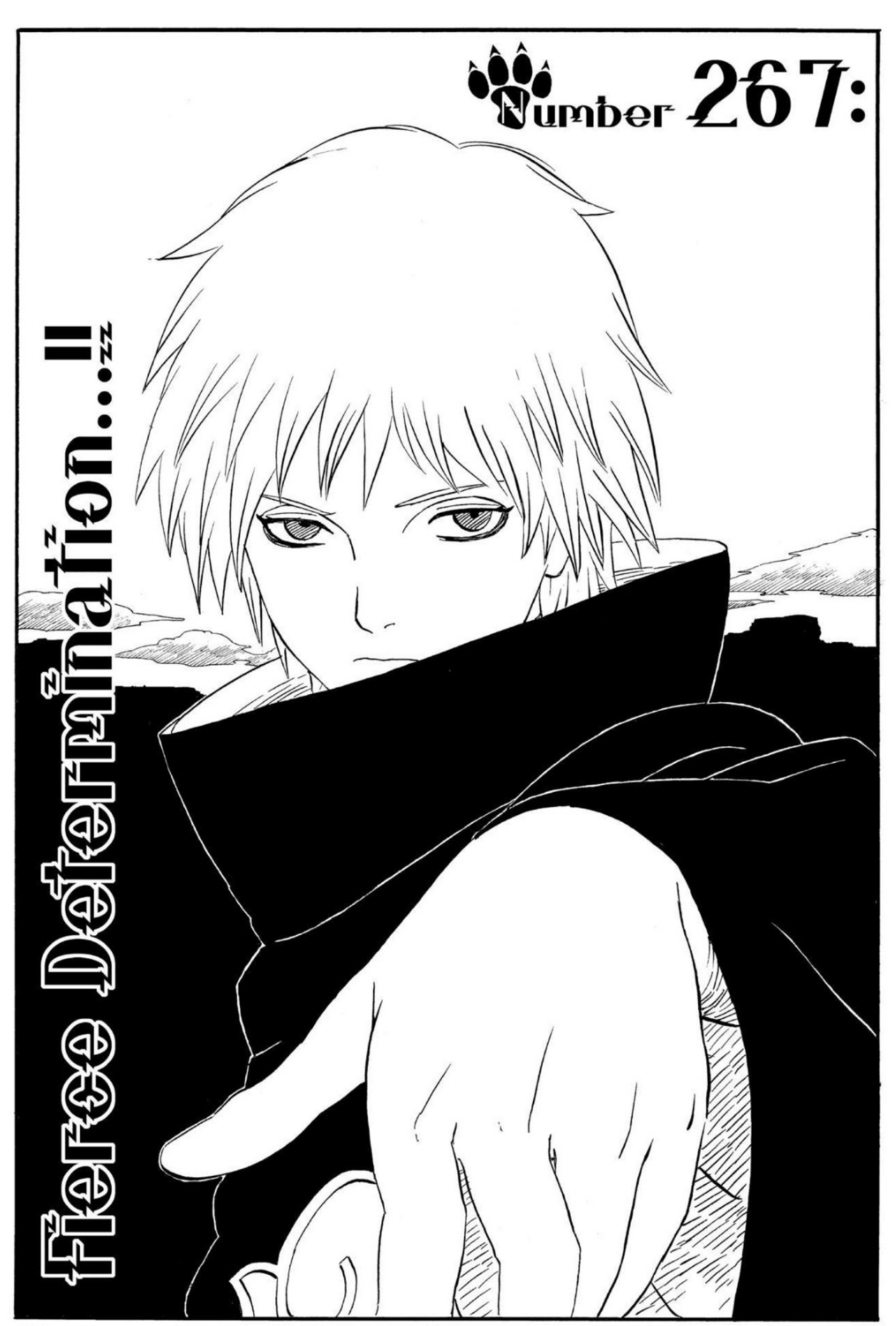


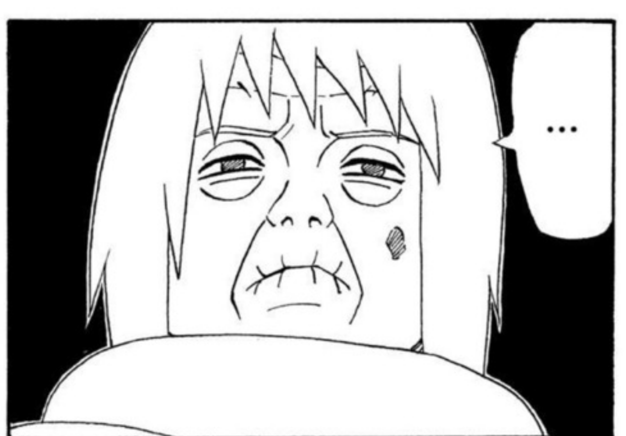

READ
THIS
WAY

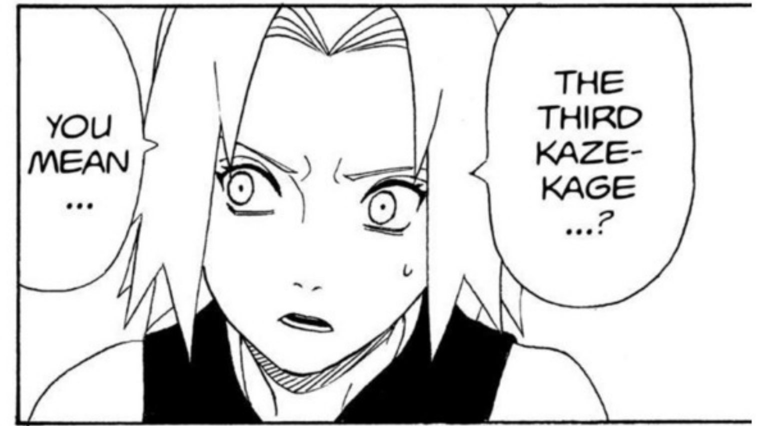

THAT'S ...
...THE THIRD KAZE-KAGE...

SWOOO
HEH...
SHALL WE BEGIN?


NARUTO


Number 267:
Fierce Determination...!!


...


YOU MEAN ...
THE THIRD KAZE-KAGE ...?


!


IT WAS MORE THAN TEN YEARS AGO... THE THIRD KAZEKAGE VANISHED SUDDENLY.

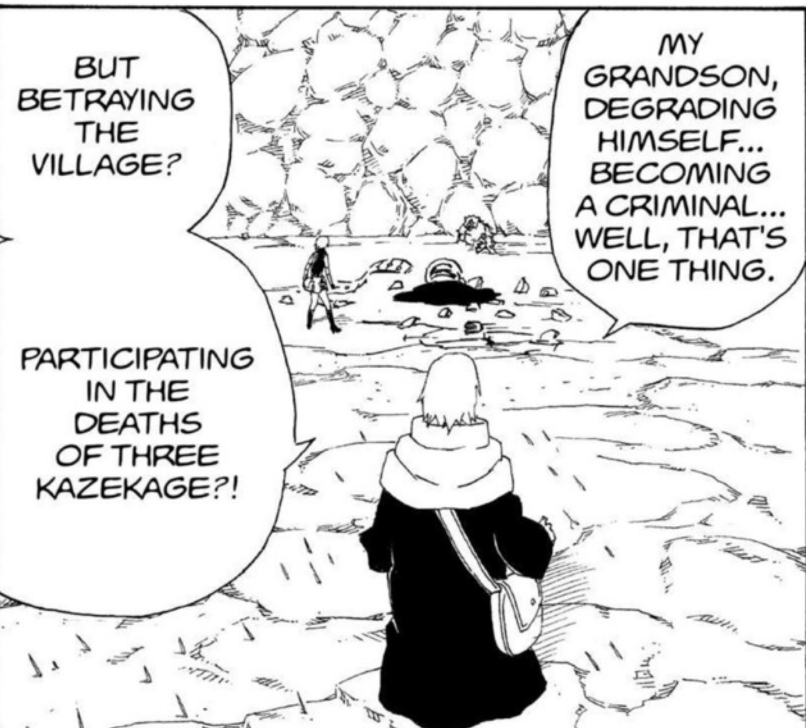

READ
THIS
WAY


SASORI... SO IT WAS YOU!


HMPH... A RETIRED WITCH, ALREADY ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE...
YET STILL YOU TROUBLE YOURSELF.


RETIRED, YES. ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE, MAYBE. BUT THAT DOESN'T PREVENT MY GETTING AROUND.
THERE ARE JUST TOO MANY THINGS LEFT UNDONE.


...


MY GRANDSON, DEGRADING HIMSELF... BECOMING A CRIMINAL... WELL, THAT'S ONE THING.
BUT BETRAYING THE VILLAGE?
PARTICIPATING IN THE DEATHS OF THREE KAZEKAGE?!


THREE OF THEM?

IT WAS OROCHIMARU WHO ACTUALLY KILLED GAARA'S FATHER, THE FOURTH KAZEKAGE.

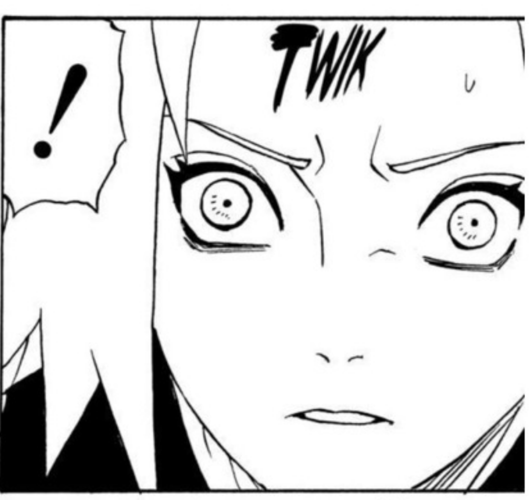
BUT SASORI WAS COMPLICIT FROM THE START.

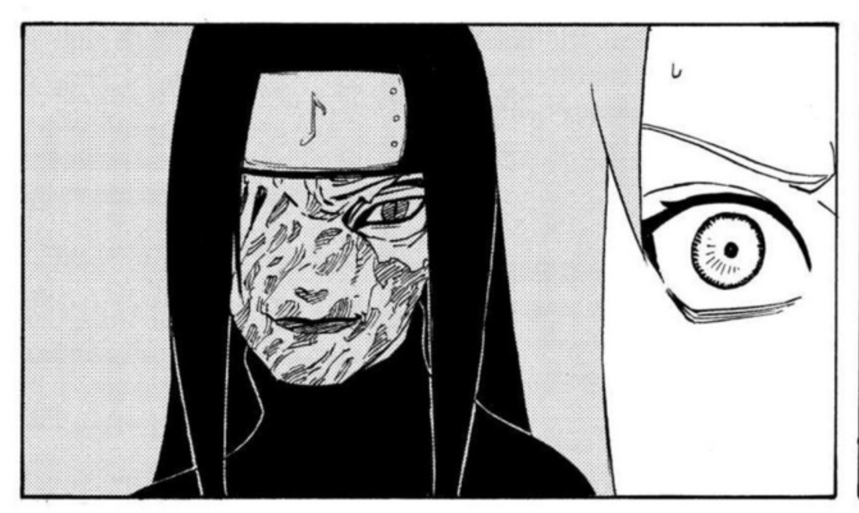
AND NOW GAARA...

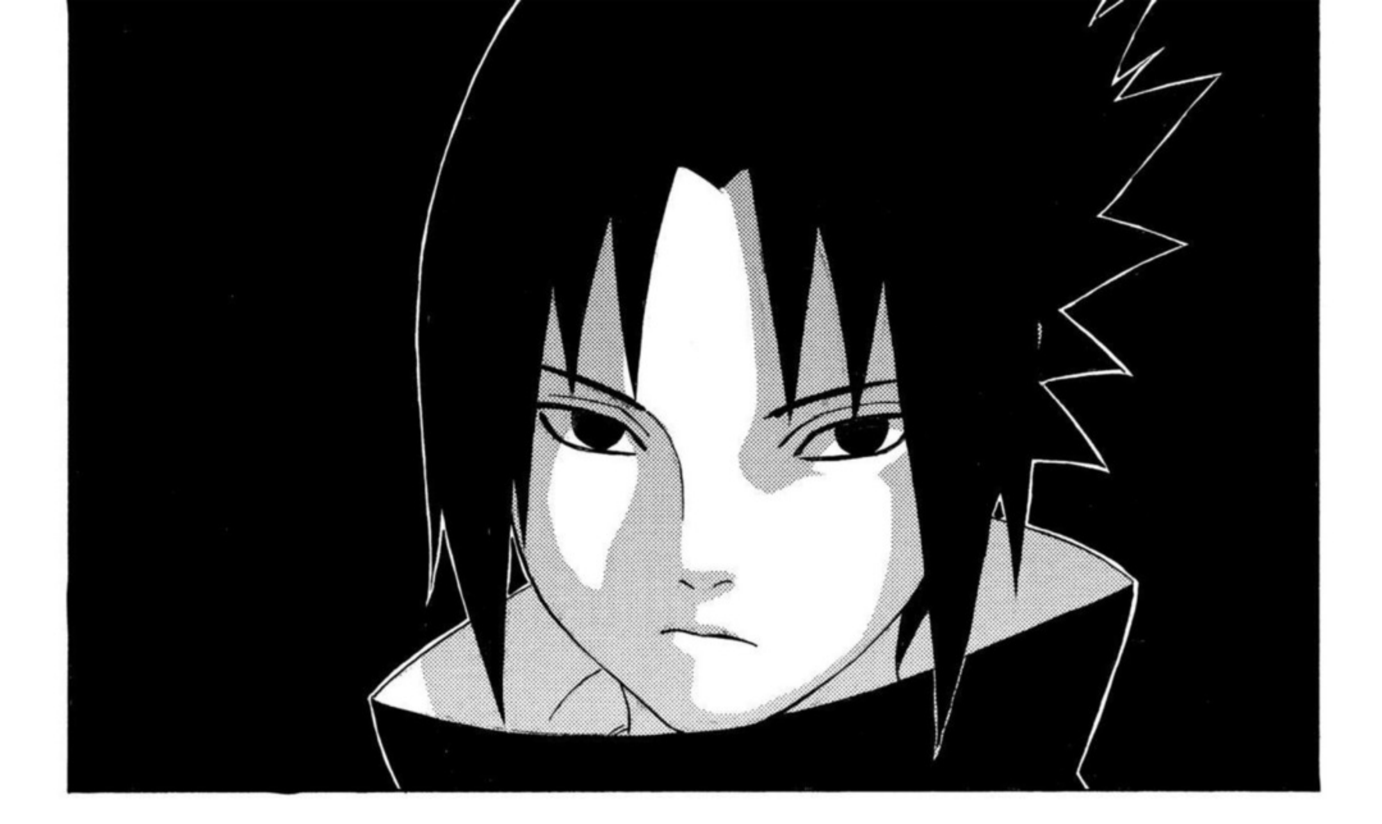
AND THE THIRD KAZEKAGE...












YOU...

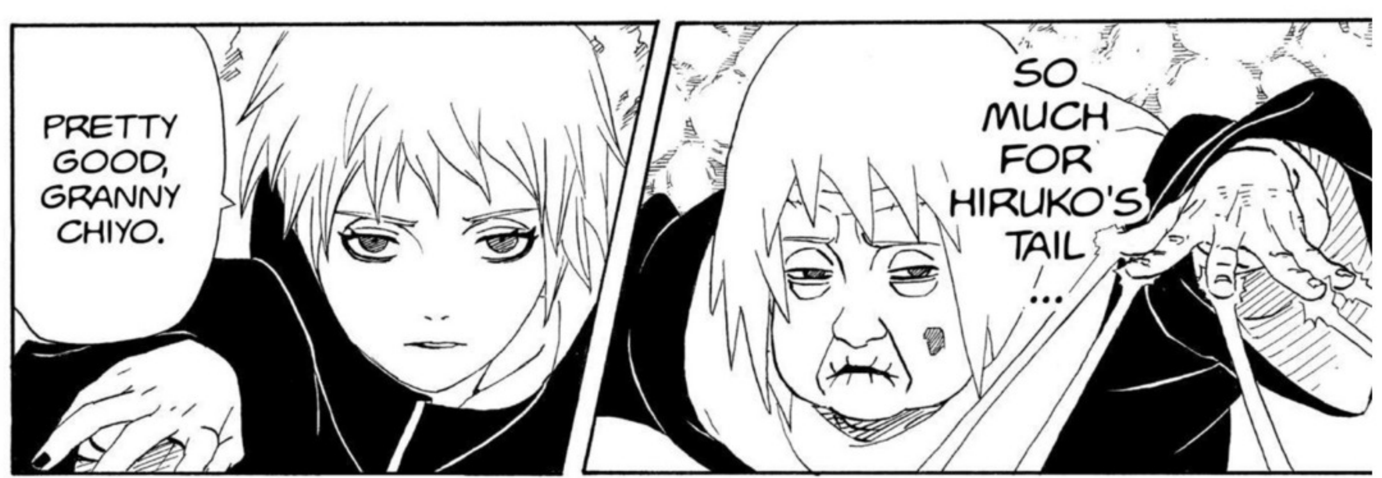

...!


YOU WORKED WITH... OROCHIMARU.
GRRRR


HM. IT'S TIME TO FINISH HERE.


FWIP
SH
YANK
!
!
TUG
ACK!!


SHNG
SPISH
!!
HE'S FAST!
FWISH
KWAH


SO MUCH FOR HIRUKO'S TAIL ...
PRETTY GOOD, GRANNY CHIYO.



YANK

SPOP

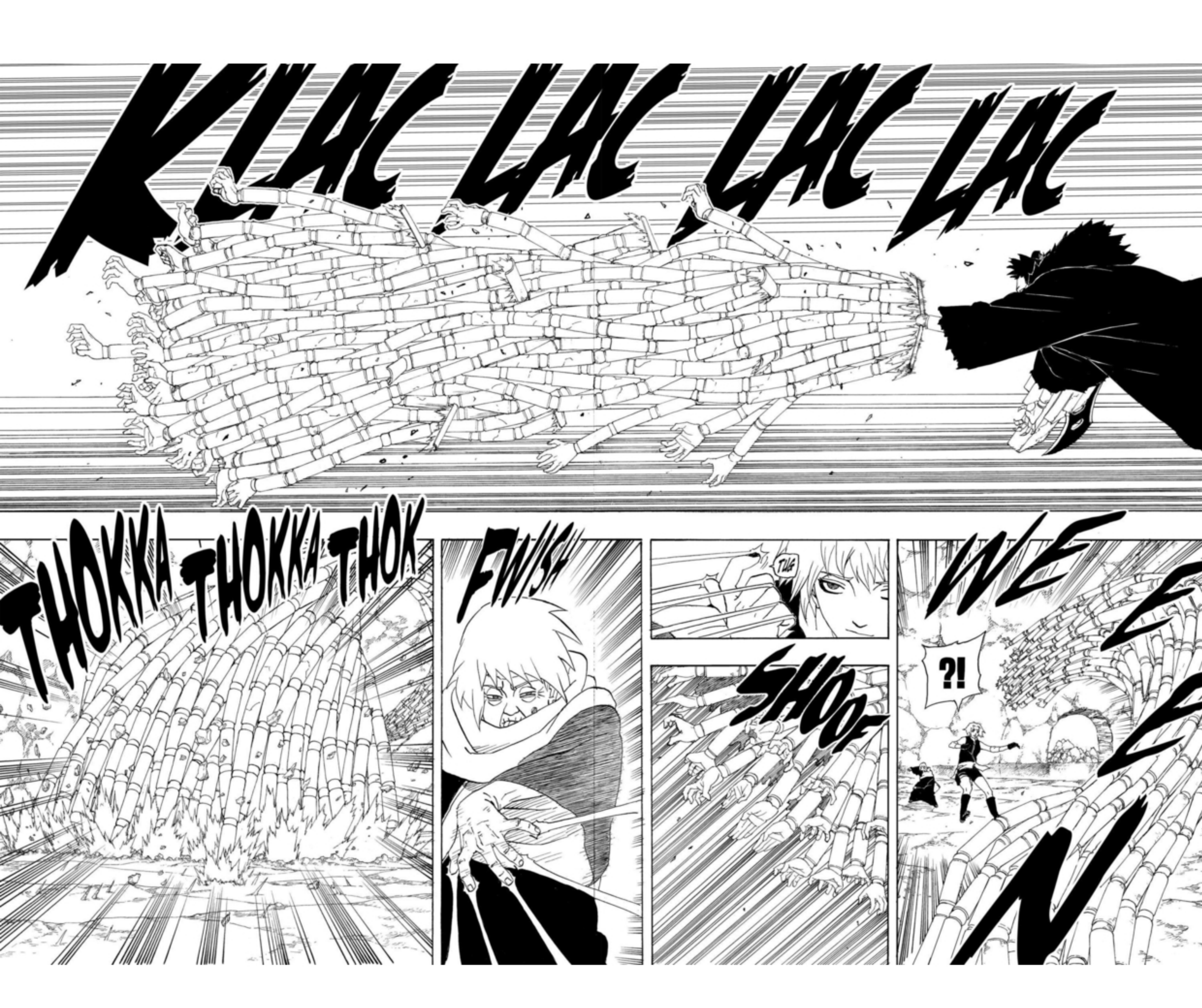
SPOP

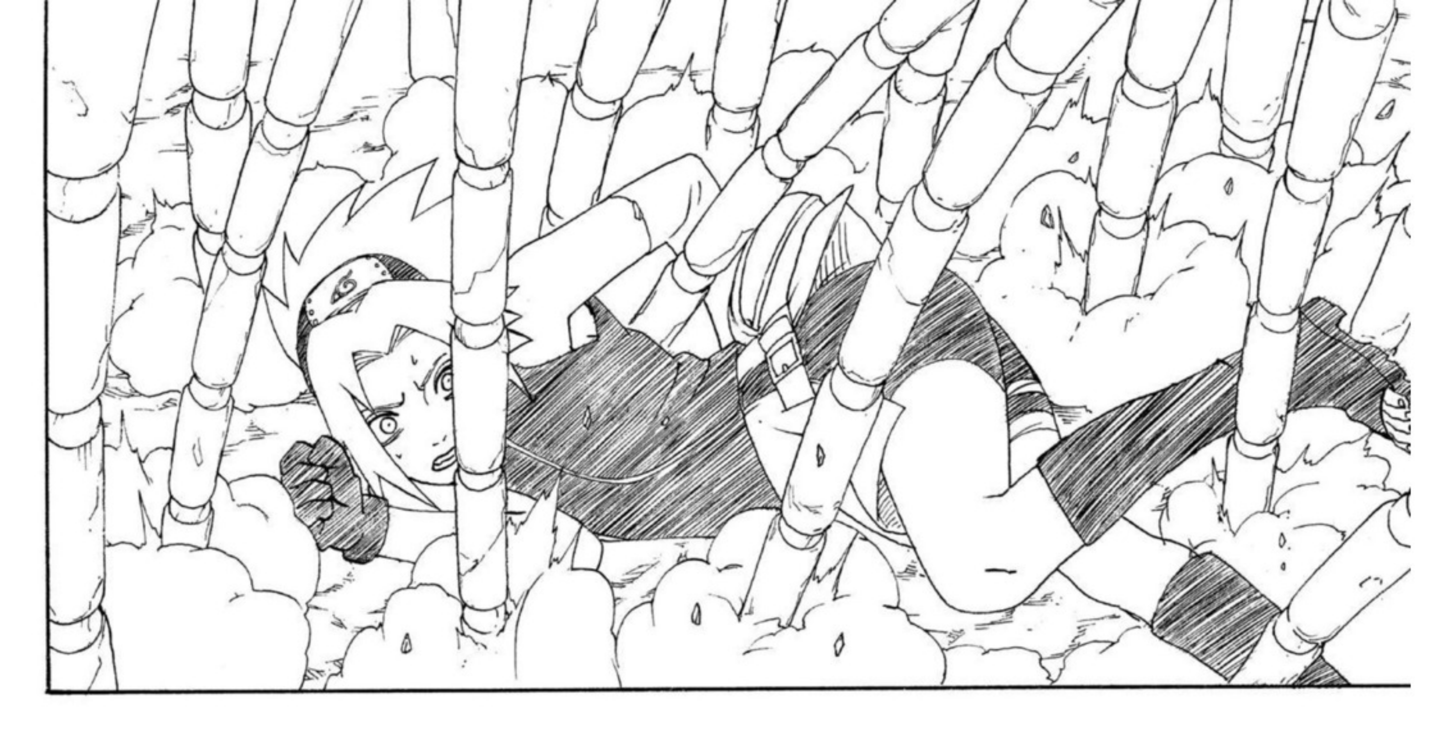
CHAKKA

CHAKKA

HERE GOES!!

ZWOOF


KLAC LAC LAC LAC
WEEEEN
?!
TUG
SHOOF
FWISH
THOKKA THOKKA THOK



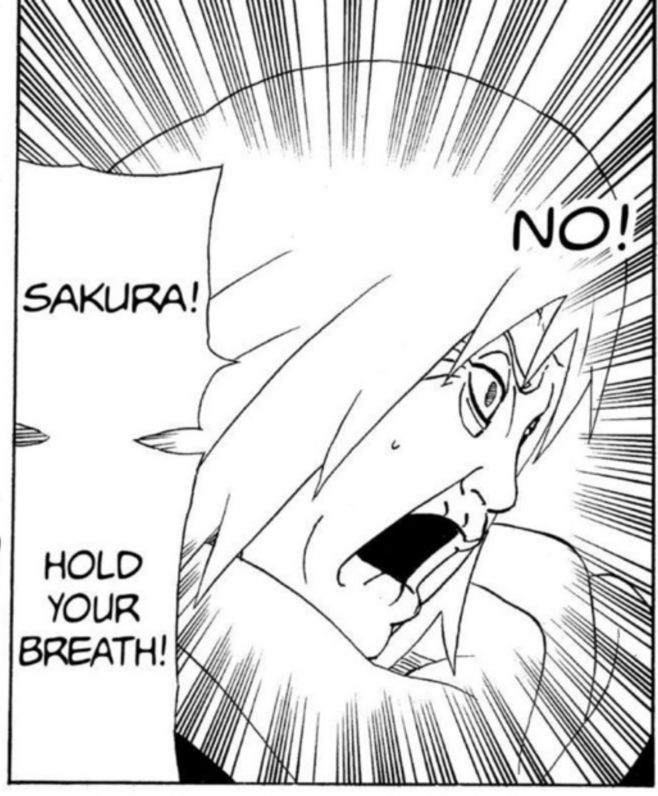

SKRNCH


TUG

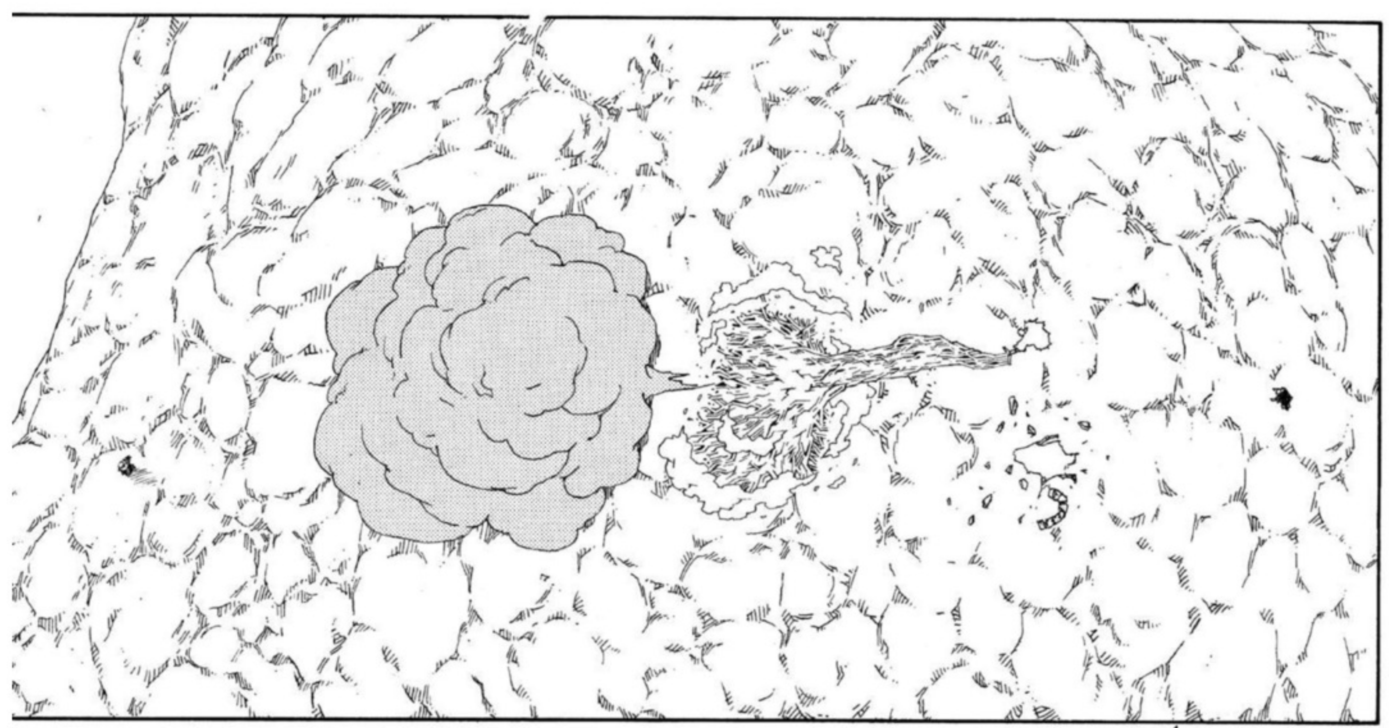

TUG
AH, THIS IS USELESS SO LONG AS SHE'S UNDER THAT BAT'S CONTROL...
OKAY THEN.


PSHHHH


!


NO!
SAKURA!
HOLD YOUR BREATH!


MWUR
ACK!
POISON ?!
MWUR




YANK


?!
GUK


NOW, POISON GAS... THAT TELLS A DIFFERENT STORY.

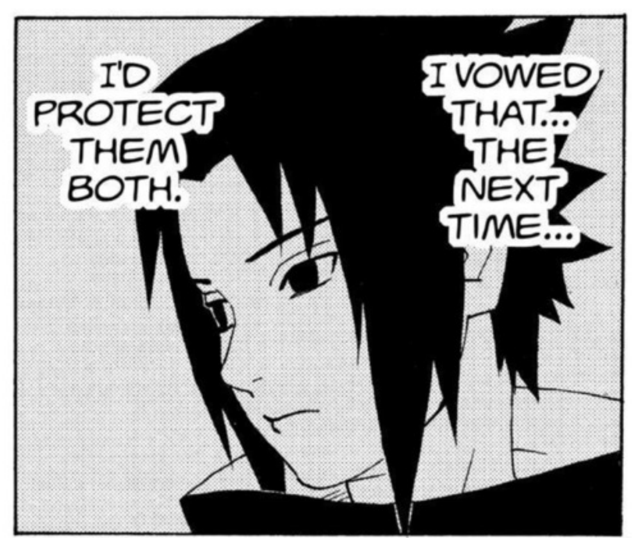
TWANG
!!
SKERK


SKEEK


WHEN A KUNAI KNIFE HAS A ROPE TIED TO IT...
YOU MIGHT DO BETTER DEFLECTING THAN DODGING.


MMG...


I... I PROMISED NARUTO...
THAT I'D... GO WITH HIM.


I VOWED THAT... THE NEXT TIME...
I'D PROTECT THEM BOTH.


READ THIS WAY


WOOSH
SAKURA! HANG IN THERE!!


I'M... NOT DONE FOR. NOT YET!!
FWT FWT


SLF


!


KA-BOOM

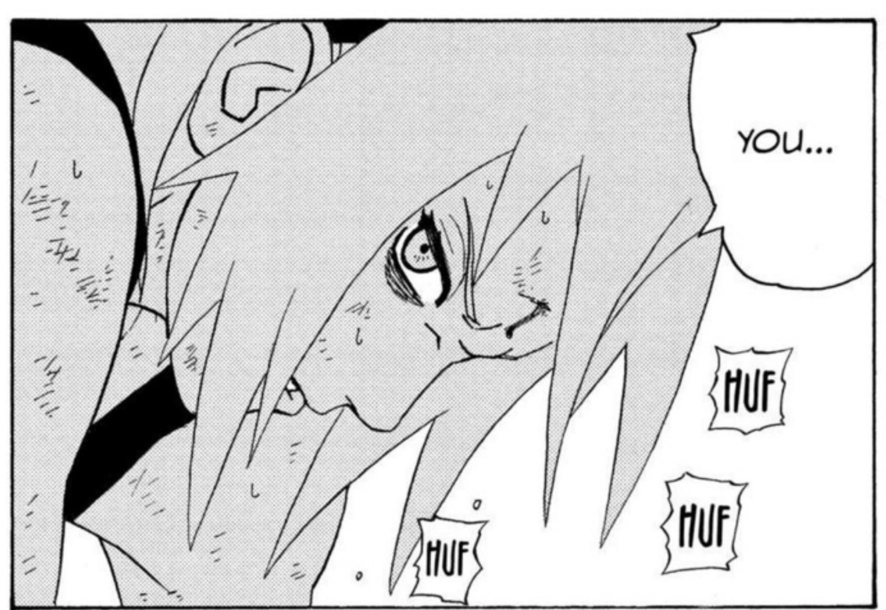

PAT
KAFF!
KAFF!


FUMP
SKISH


OH, THIS GIRL. USING A LETTER BOMB TO DISSIPATE THE GAS ...
SHE NEARLY BLEW HERSELF UP, ALONG WITH THE TRAP...
KAFF


HOW RECK-LESS...


OH WELL.


YOU...
HUF
HUF
HUF


READ THIS WAY


I WILL GET YOU!!
YOU CAN BLOW MY LIMBS OFF! YOU CAN POISON ME UNTIL I CAN'T MOVE, AND I'LL STILL GET YOU!!


NO MATTER WHAT YOU PULL!
NO MATTER WHAT YOU'VE GOT!
I'LL DRAG YOU TO THE EDGE OF DEATH AND MAKE YOU SCREAM ALL ABOUT OROCHI-MARU!
SO BE...


SHF


FWSSH WSH WSH WSH
THOK THOK THOK THOK THOK

WHEN A WOMAN IS TALKING...

A MAN DOES WELL TO LISTEN QUIETLY.

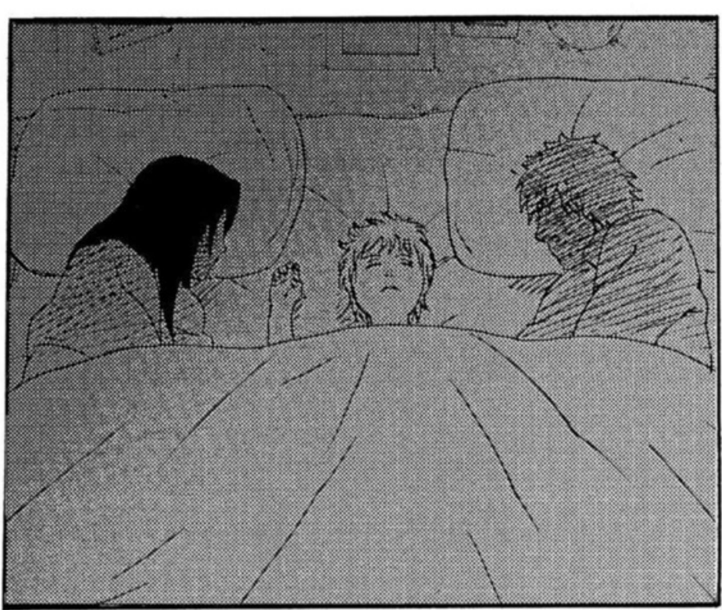


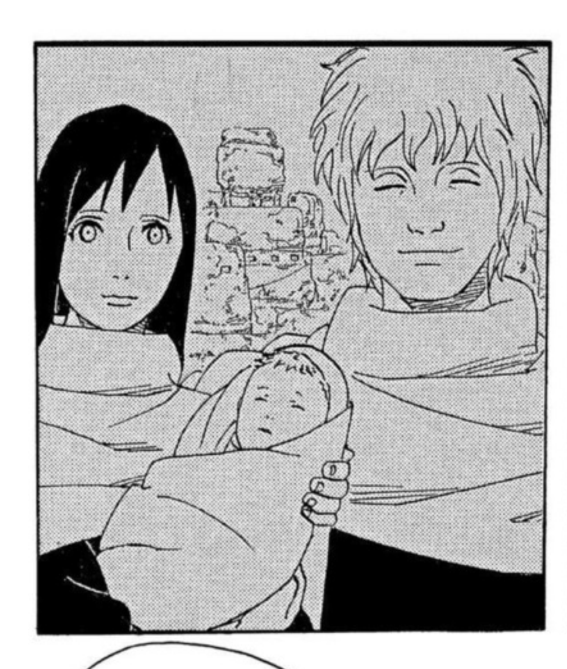

READ
THIS
WAY


?!


OH...
THOSE...


THAT'S RIGHT.
THE VERY FIRST PUPPETS YOU CREATED.



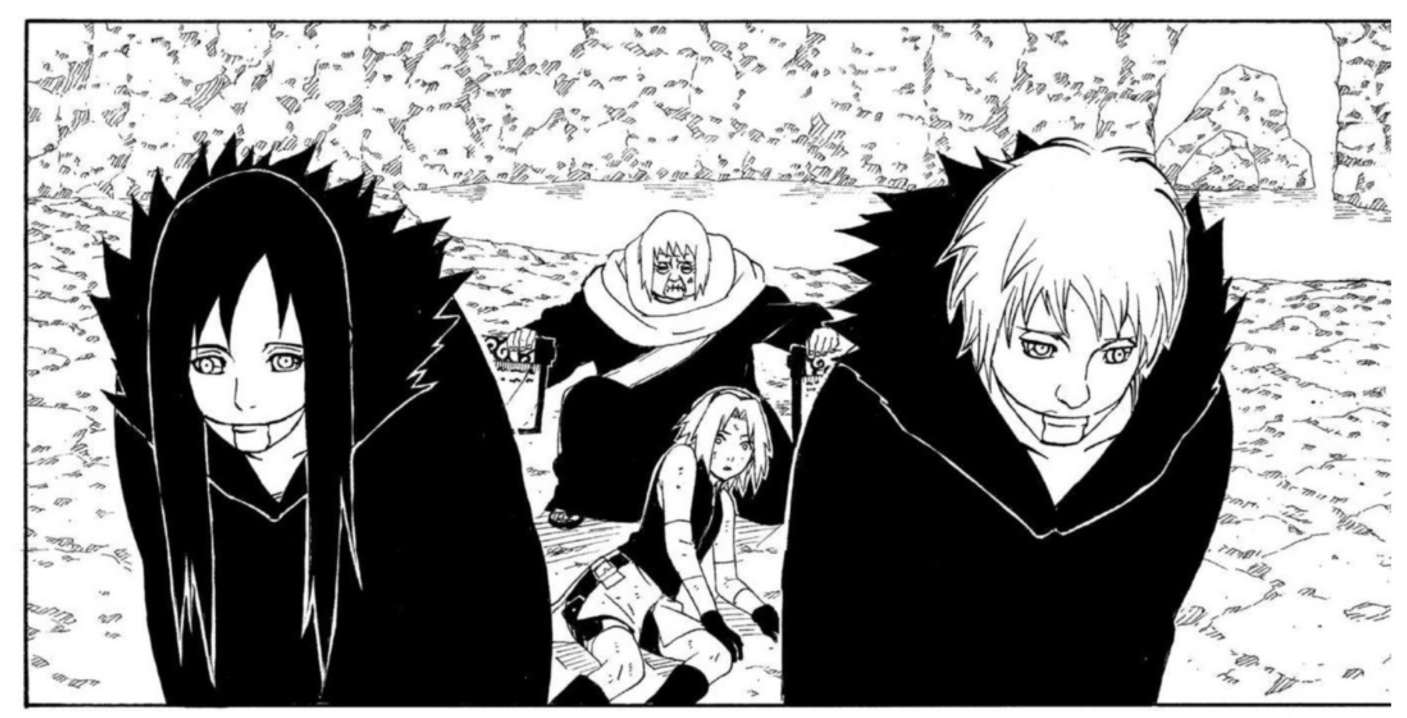



KASHAK
THE MOTHER AND THE FATHER.
KASHAK


NARUTO

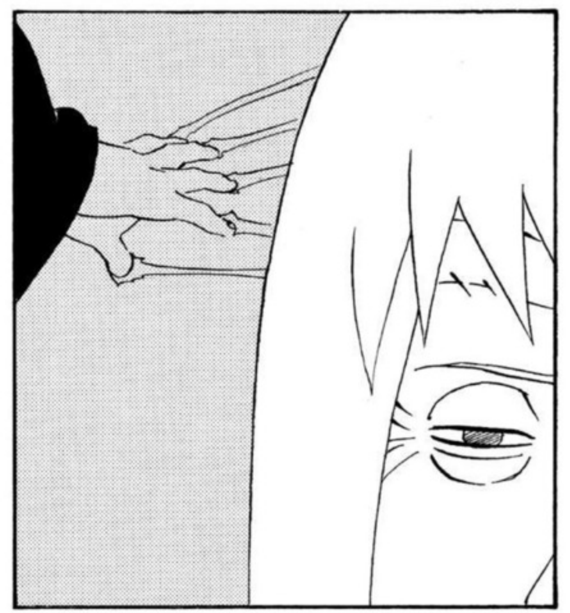
Number 268: Puppet Masters!!


WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO DO WITH THEM NOW?
I MADE THEM.
I KNOW THEIR WORKINGS INSIDE OUT.



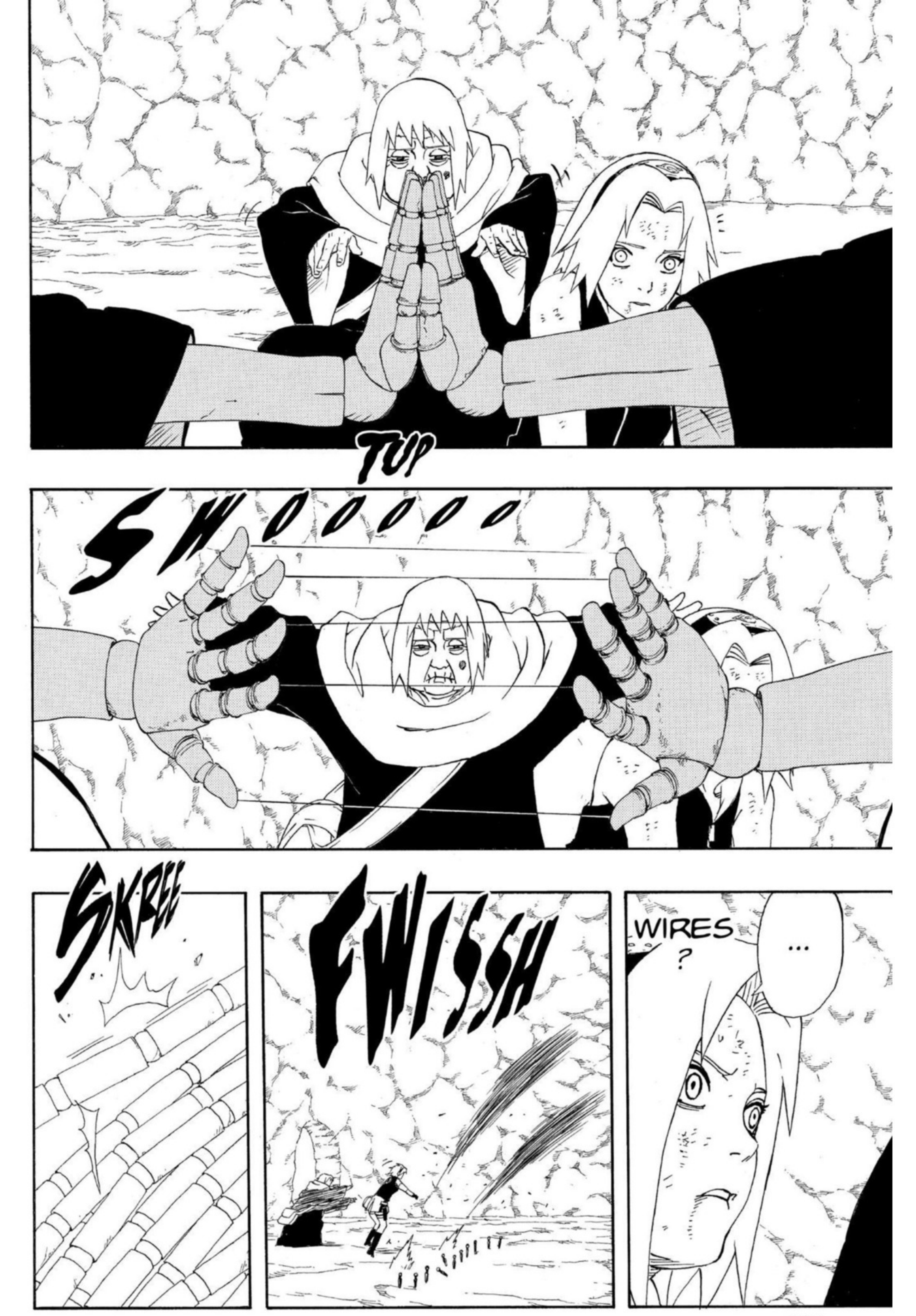

...


...

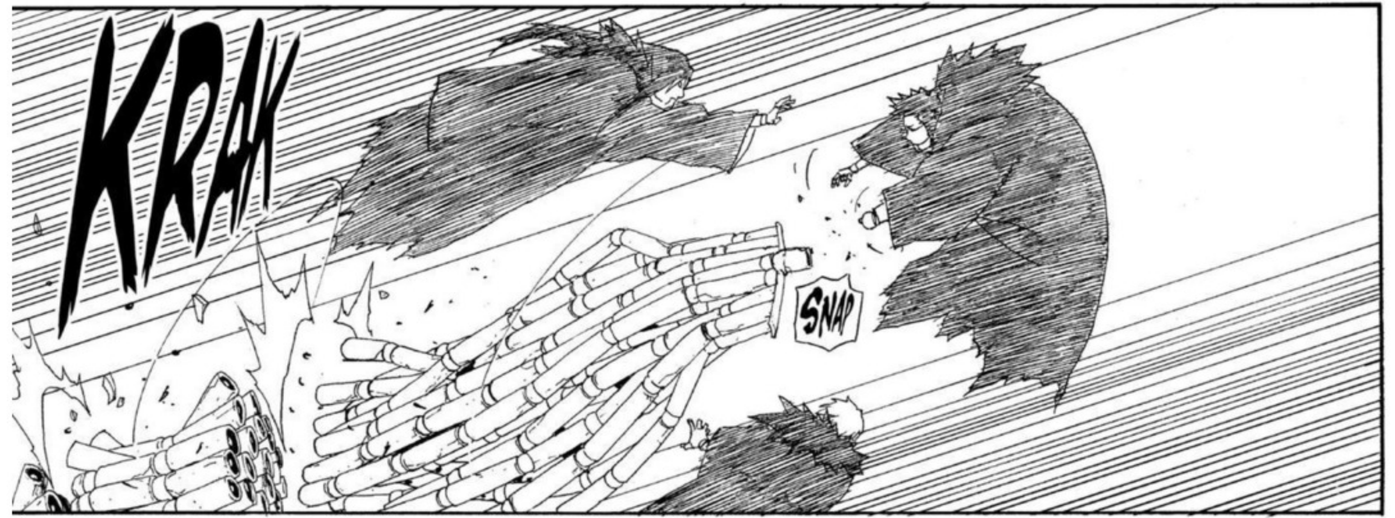



READ
THIS
WAY

...

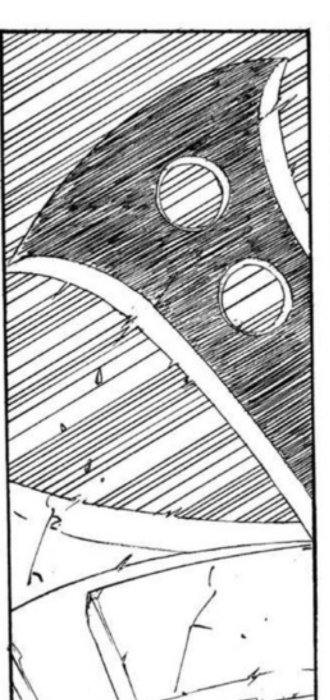

TUP
SWOOOOO
SKREE
FWISSH
WIRES?
...

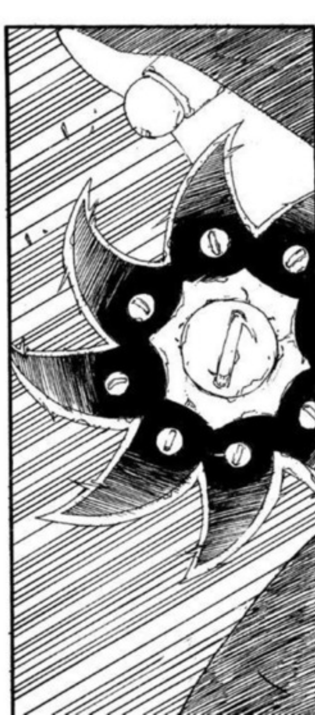
SKLISH SKLISH SKLISH
FSSH
FSSH



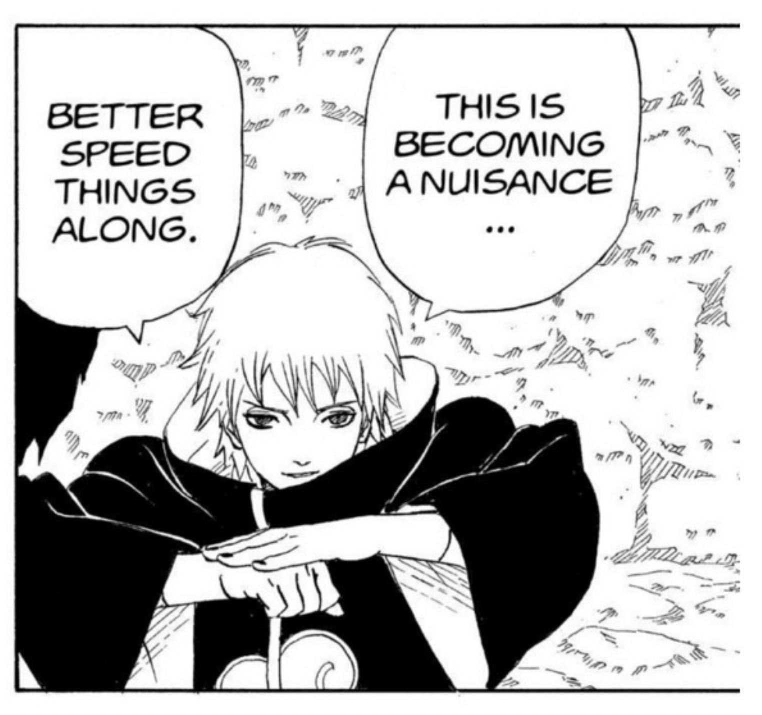






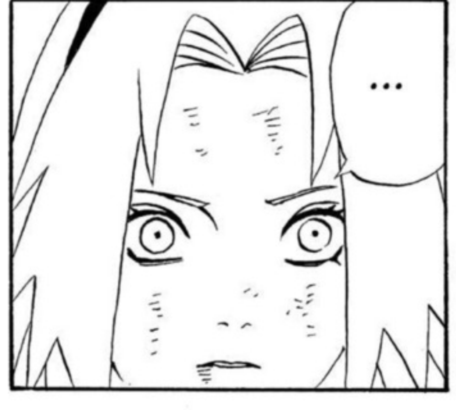



FWISH
FWISH
FWISH
FWISH
THOK
THOK
THOK
THOK
THOK
THOK
THOK
THOK
THOK
THOK
THOK
THOK
FWISH
FWISH
FWISH
FWISH
SHAII
NNG
WS
ST
PLIK
PLIK
TINK
TINK
THIS IS... INCREDIBLE...


THIS IS BECOMING A NUISANCE ...
BETTER SPEED THINGS ALONG.




...


...


...

READ THIS WAY

ZWUR ZWUR

ZWUR ZWUR ZWUR

AS I FIGURED, THAT PUPPET...

...CAN USE THE THIRD KAZEKAGE'S OWN JUTSU.

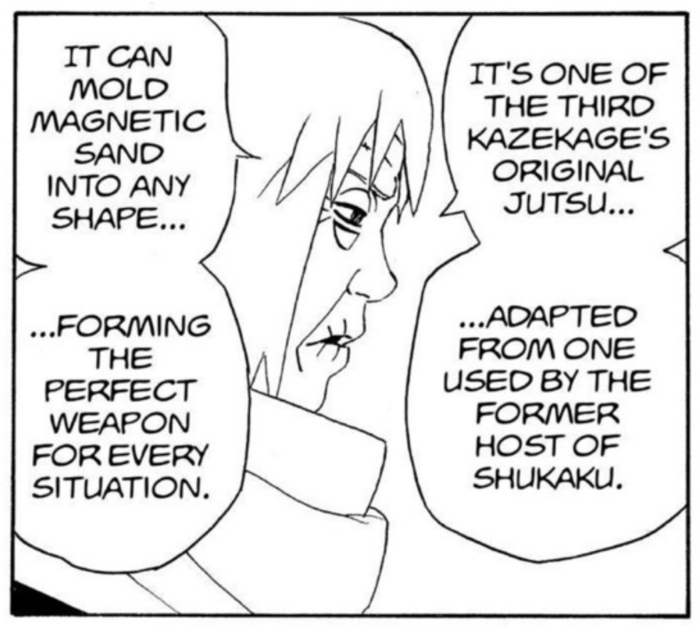
HAVEN'T SEEN IT FOR A WHILE, HAVE YOU?

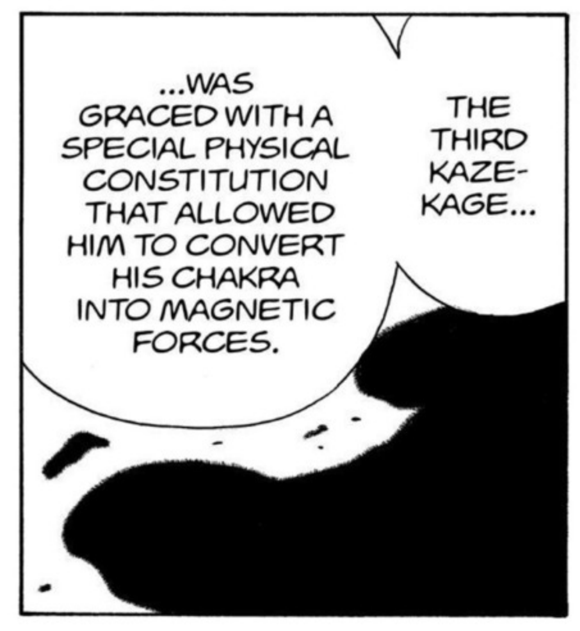
IF YOU RECALL, THIS IS WHAT MADE HIS NAME AS THE MOST POWERFUL OF ALL.



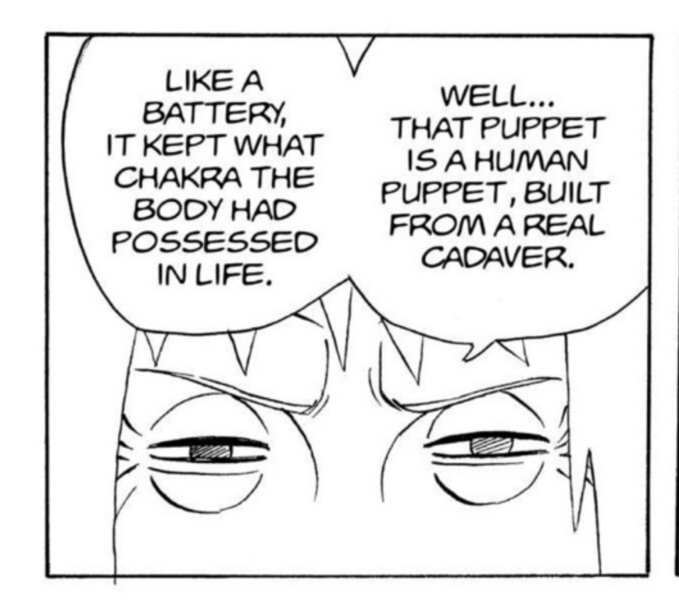


SATETSU, THE IRON SAND.

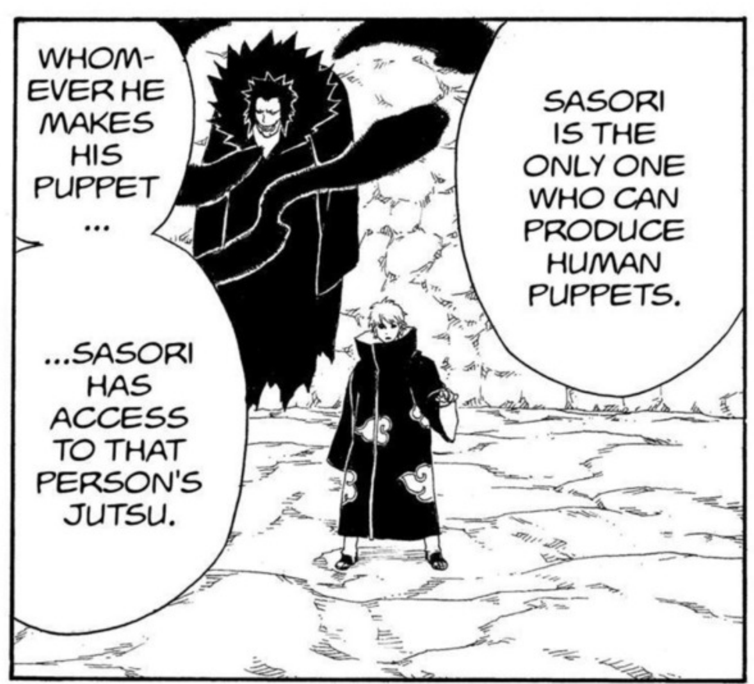








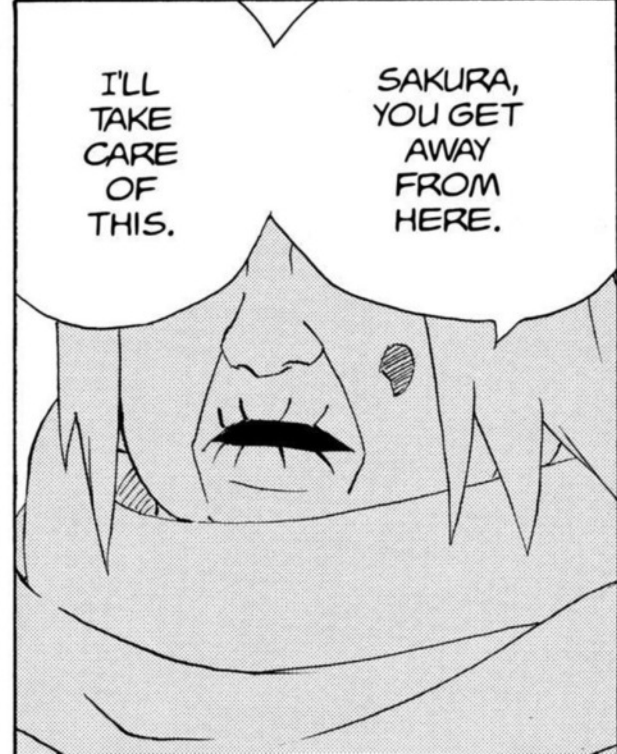

READ THIS WAY

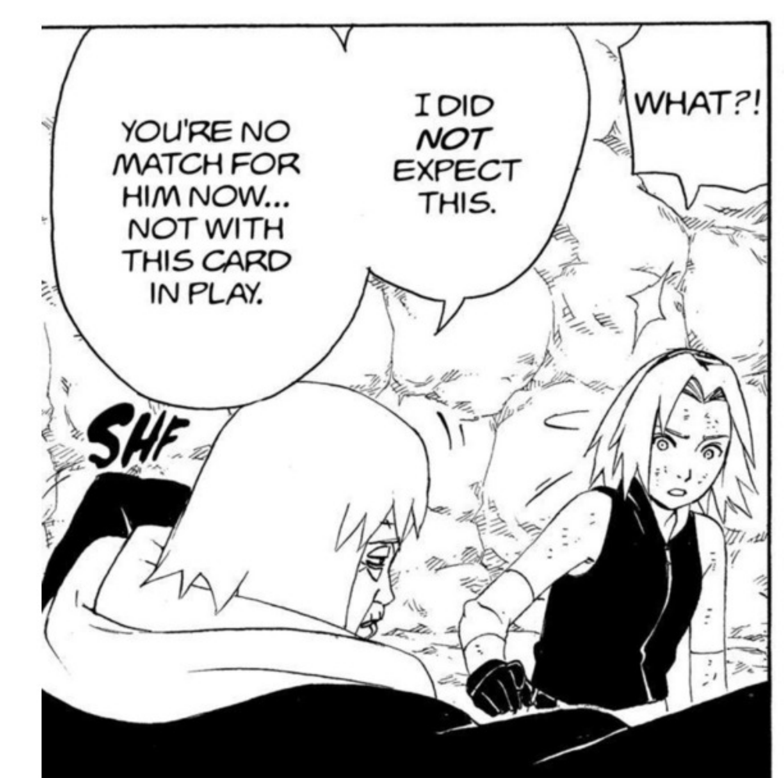

SASORI IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN PRODUCE HUMAN PUPPETS.
WHOMEVER HE MAKES HIS PUPPET ...
...SASORI HAS ACCESS TO THAT PERSON'S JUTSU.


ULTIMATELY, THAT'S WHAT GIVES HIM SUCH SUPREME POWER.
CHOK


OH, THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN THAT.
REMEMBER, OF ALL MY COLLECTION THIS ONE IS MY FAVORITE.


...


SAKURA, YOU GET AWAY FROM HERE.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.


WHAT?!
I DID *NOT* EXPECT THIS.
YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR HIM NOW... NOT WITH THIS CARD IN PLAY.
SHF


FWM
FWU
FWISH
TOO LATE...
IRON SAND SHOWER!
WSH WSH WSH


GLOW
?!


!!


THIS IS BAD.
!!

POW POW POW POW POW POW POW POW
HOOOOOO
...!

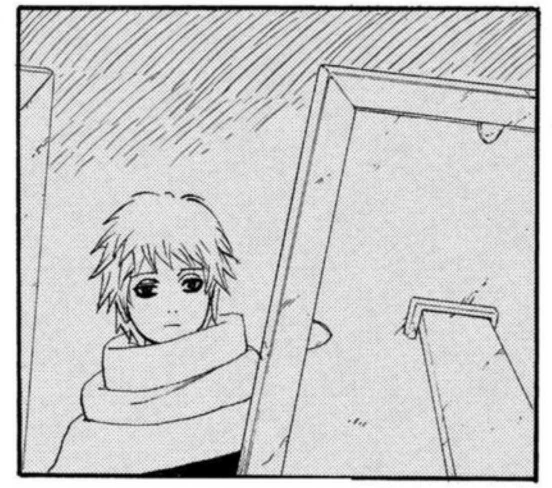
SSSSSSS

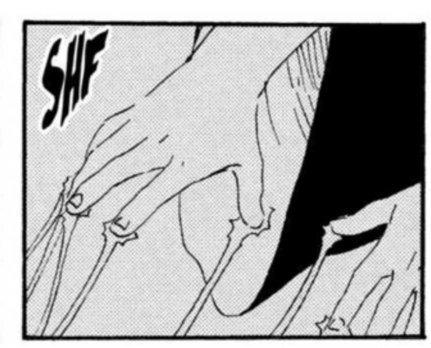

URG...
SKRRT


SO YOU DID FIDDLE A BIT.
CHAKRA SHIELD, HUH?
QUITE AN UPGRADE SINCE LAST I PLAYED WITH THEM.

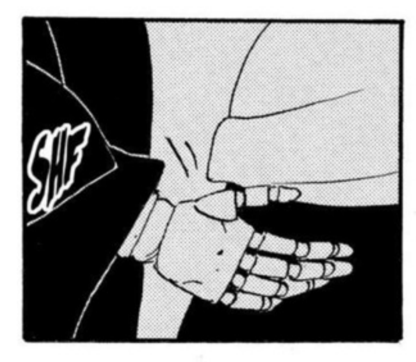
READ THIS WAY

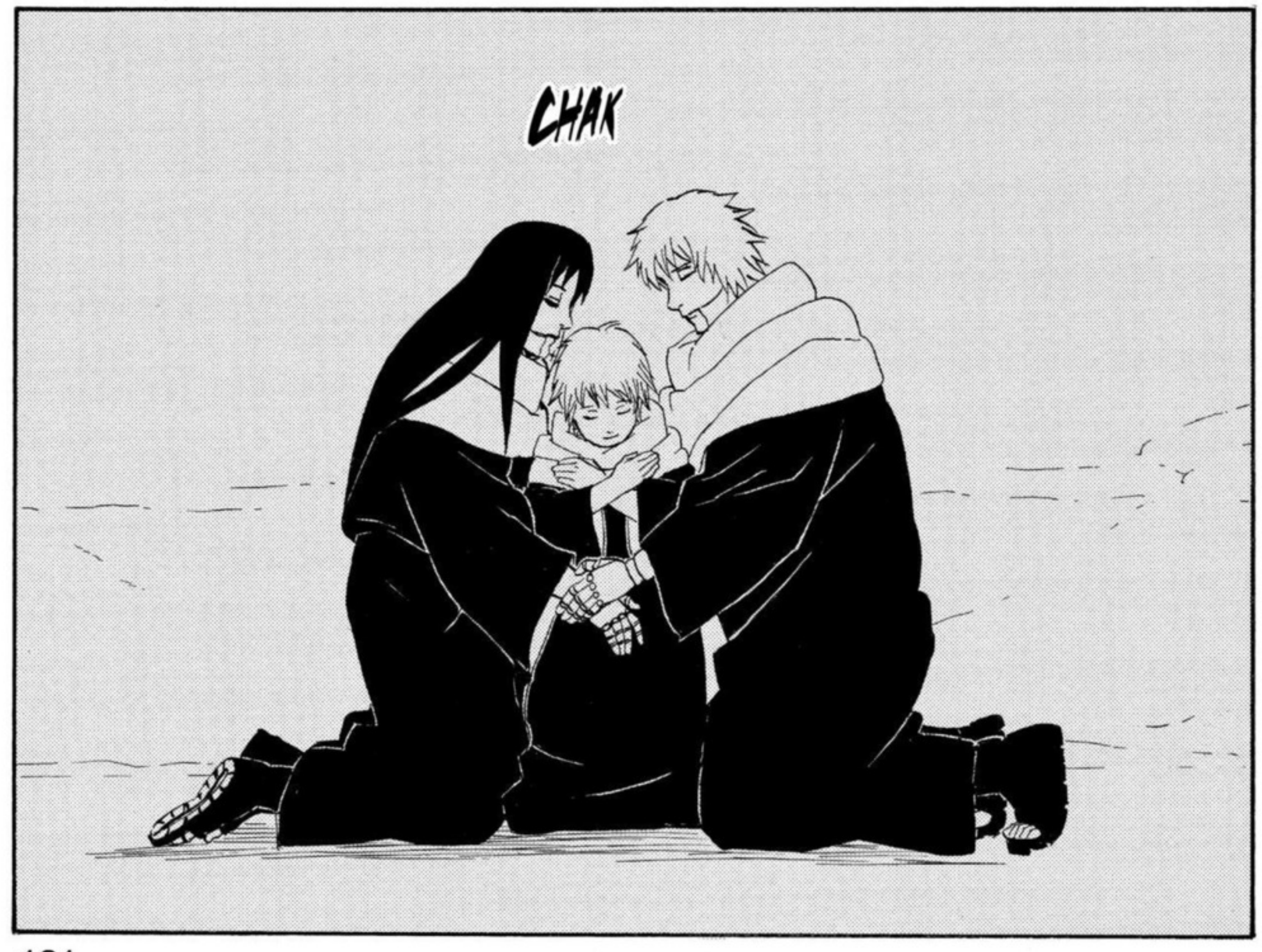




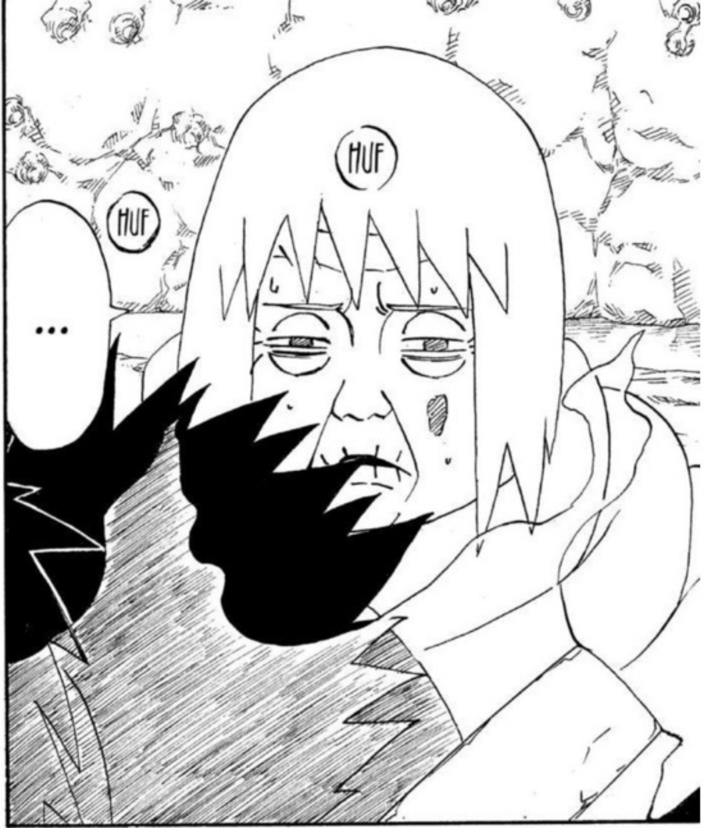






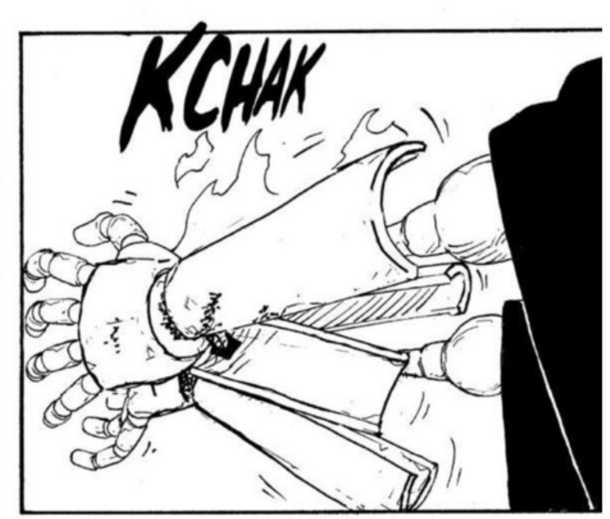


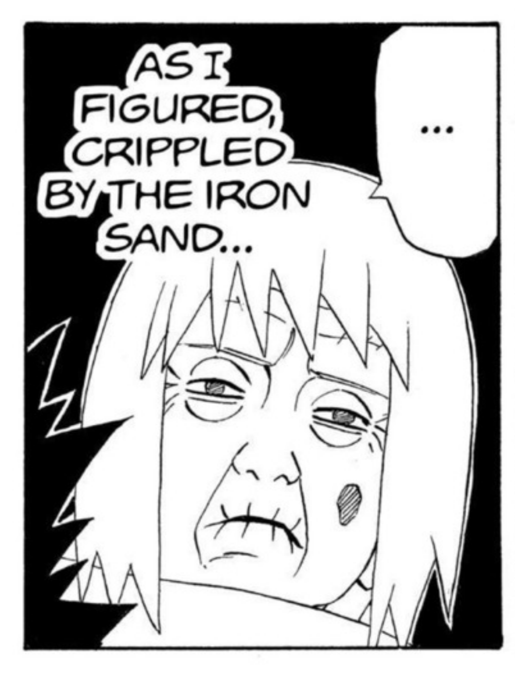

SSSSS

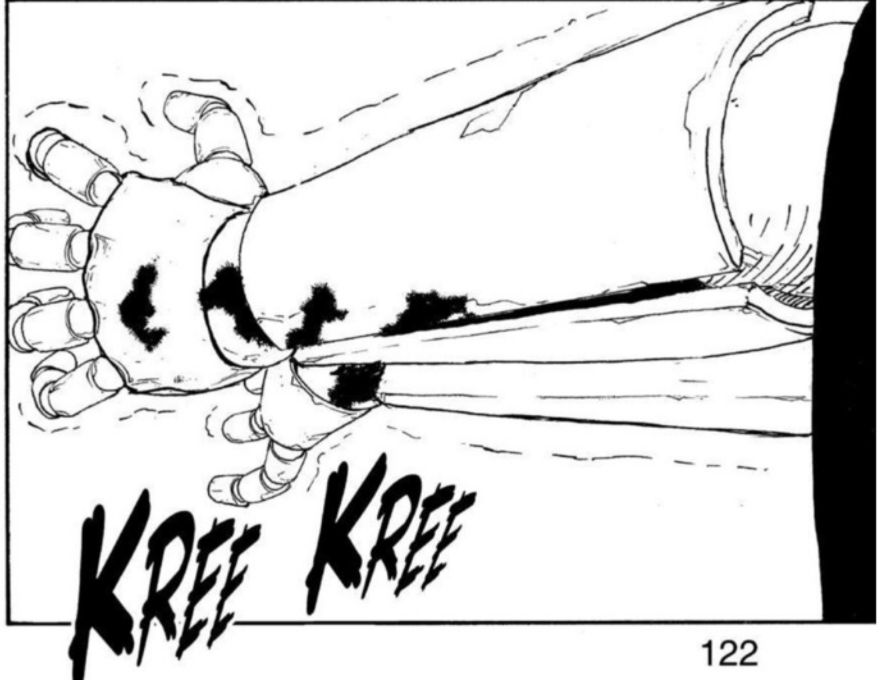

HUF
HUF
...


...
SKREEK

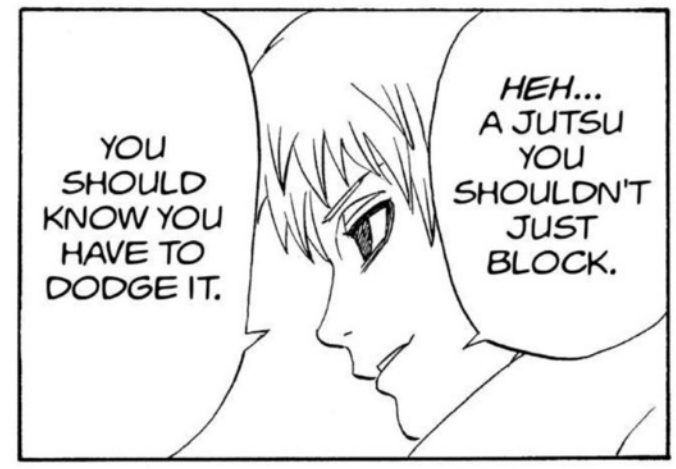

!
MMG

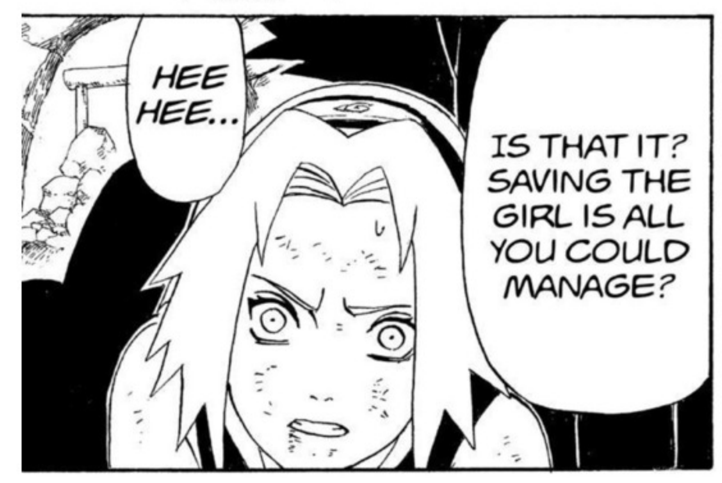

KCHAK


AS I FIGURED, CRIPPLED BY THE IRON SAND...
...


KREE KREE

READ THIS WAY

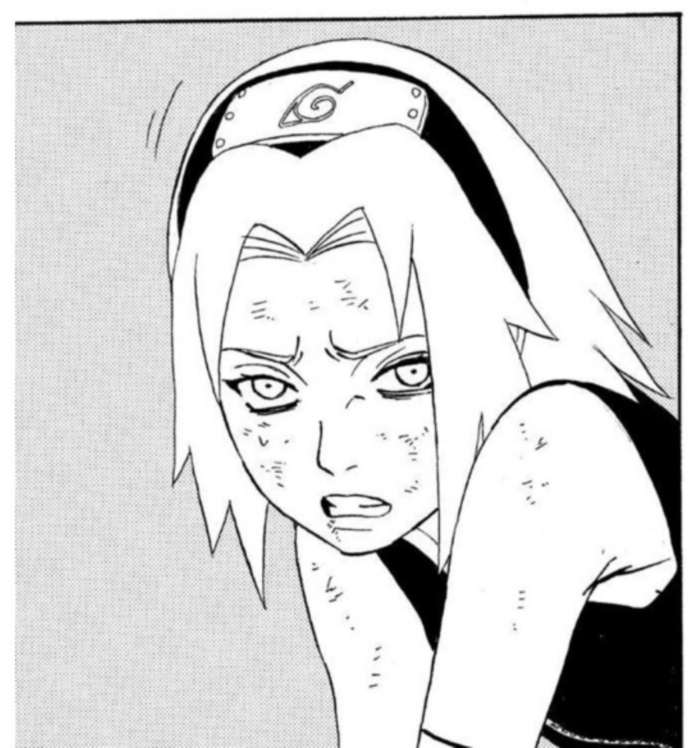






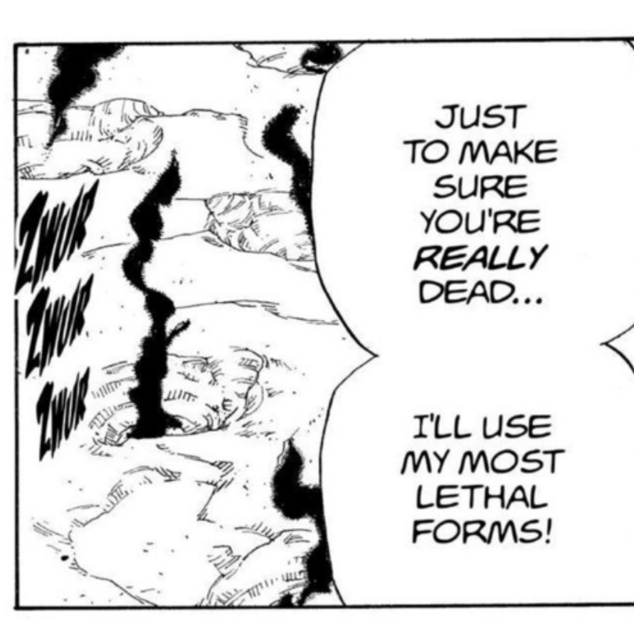


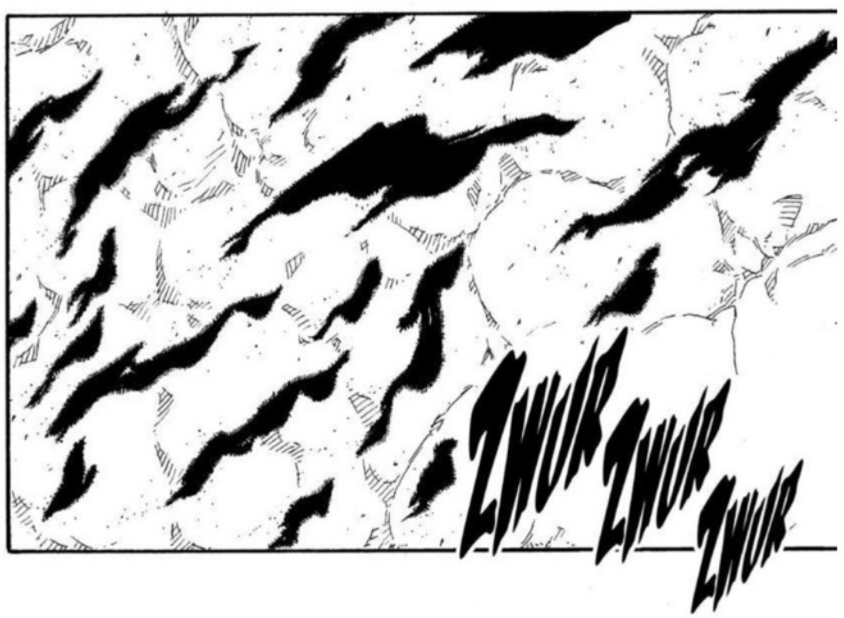


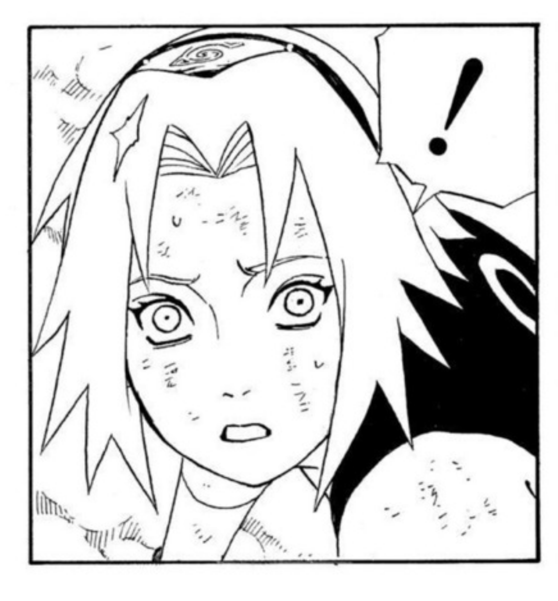


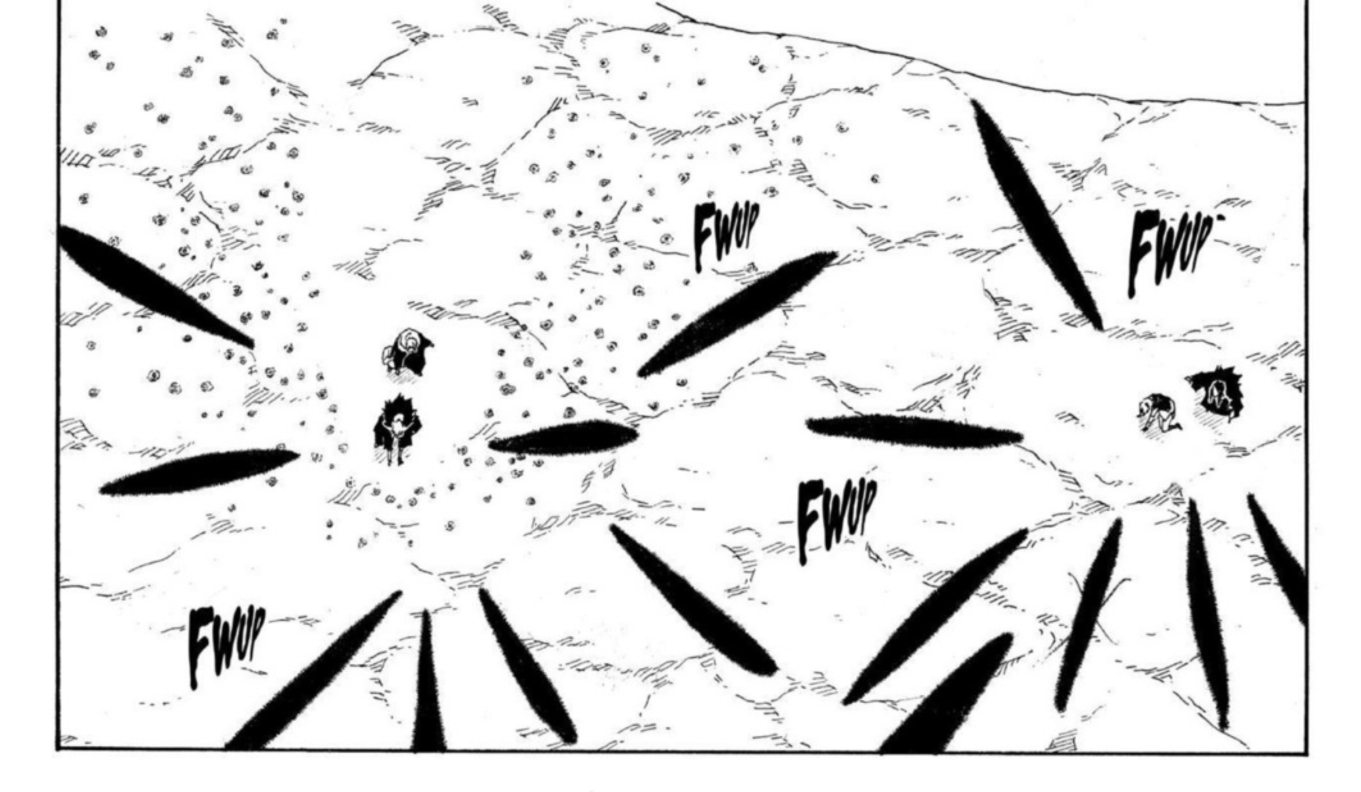

NOW...


THIS TIME I ATTACK...
...BOTH OF YOU AT ONCE!


JUST TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE *REALLY* DEAD...
I'LL USE MY MOST LETHAL FORMS!
ZWUR ZWUR ZWUR


ZWUR ZWUR ZWUR

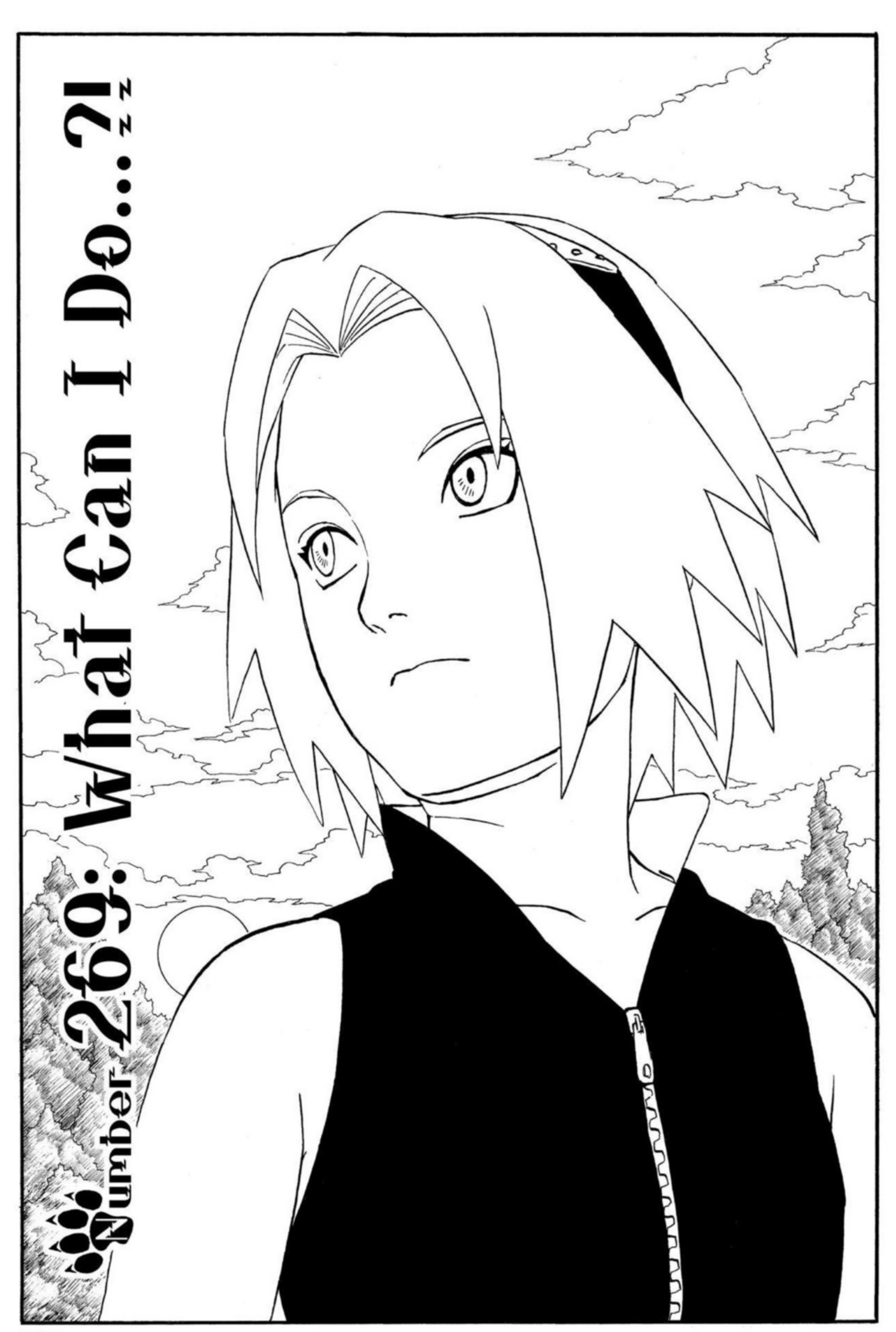

!


FWUP
FWUP
FWUP
FWUP


ONE PUPPET, TWO PEOPLE. CAN'T PROTECT BOTH.
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT, WITCH?!


HEE HEE... LET'S SEE...
FWOOOM
...WHICH ONE WILL DIE.


NARUTO


Number 269: What Can I Do...?!


TUG
FLUP
DWOOF

READ THIS WAY

KWEEE

BAKOOM

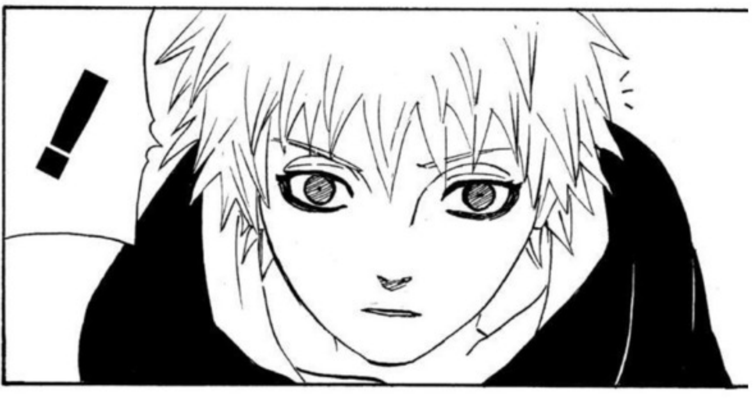
BAKOOM





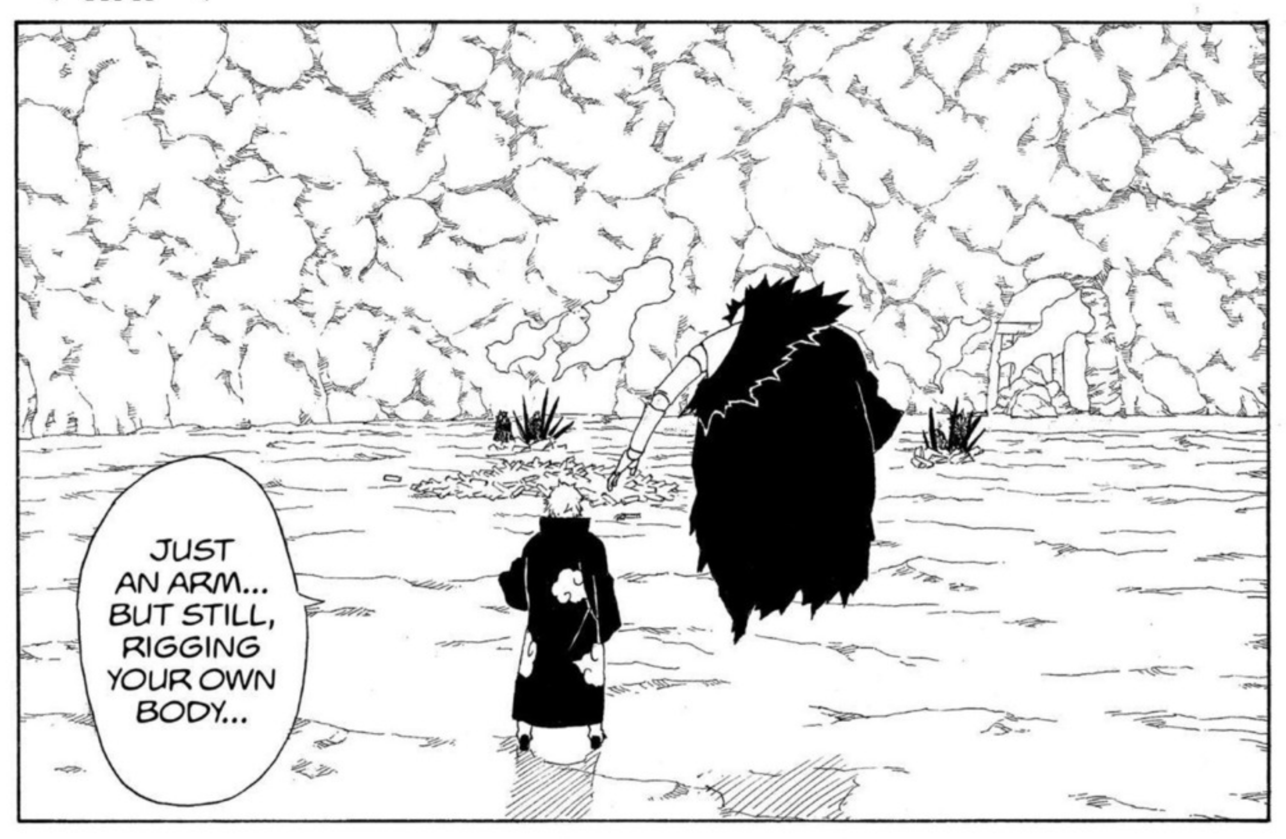








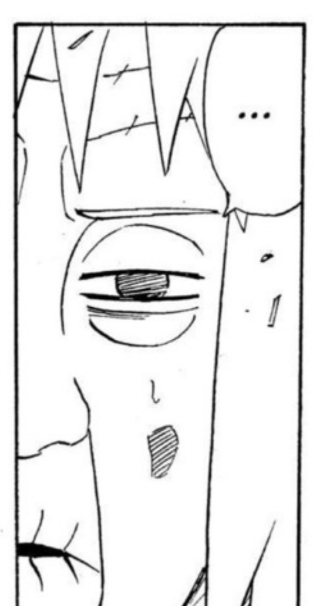

READ
THIS
WAY


JUST AN ARM... BUT STILL, RIGGING YOUR OWN BODY...


WE PUPPET MASTERS...
WE'RE ALL OF A KIND, HUH?
HEH HEH...


SSSSS
HUF
HUF
...!


...


...


KREEK
KREEK

I SEE...

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU DID, THEN.

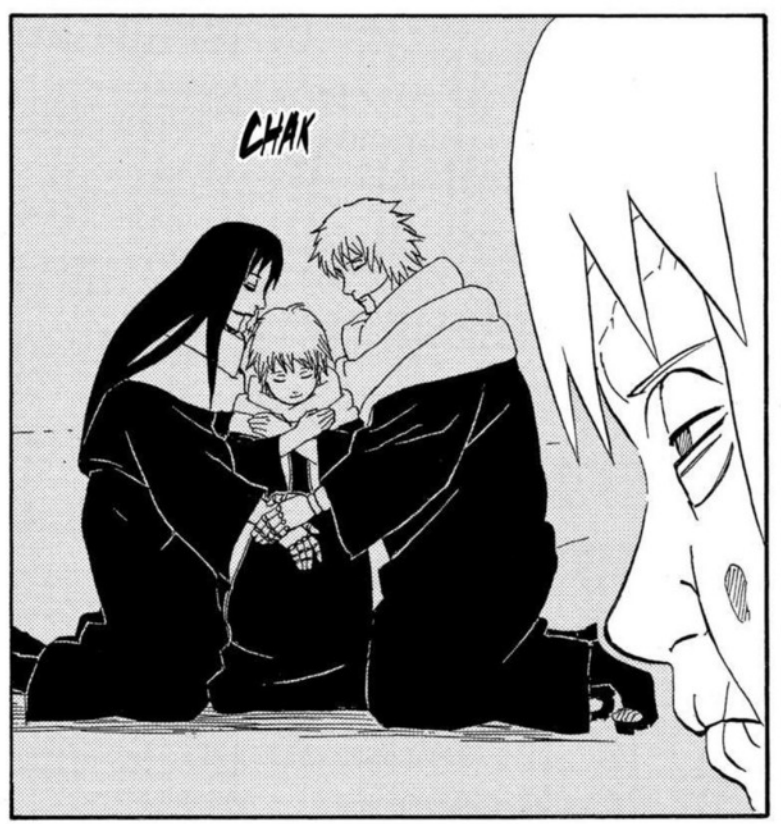
...

?!

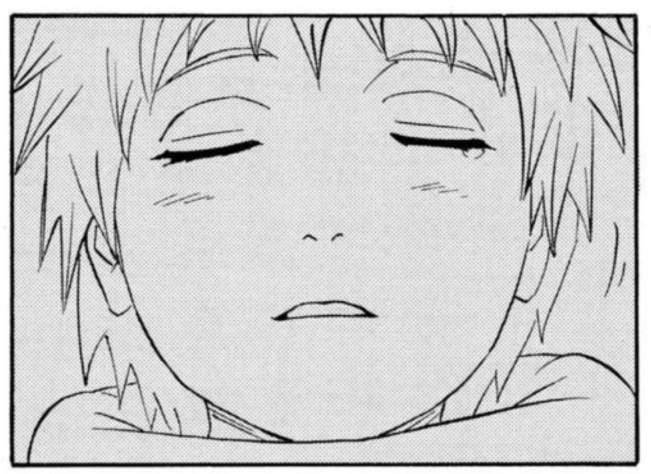
SPOP

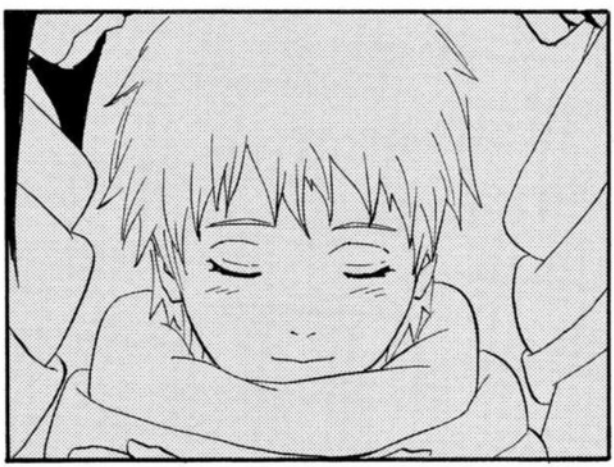


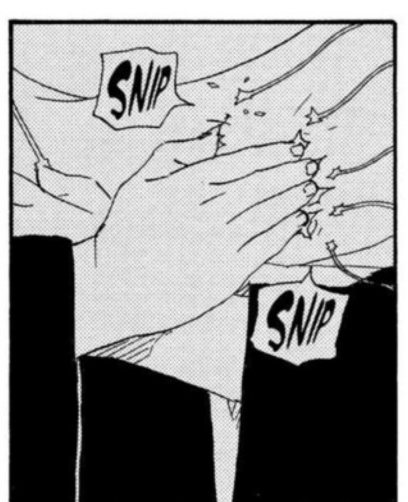

READ THIS WAY


CHAK

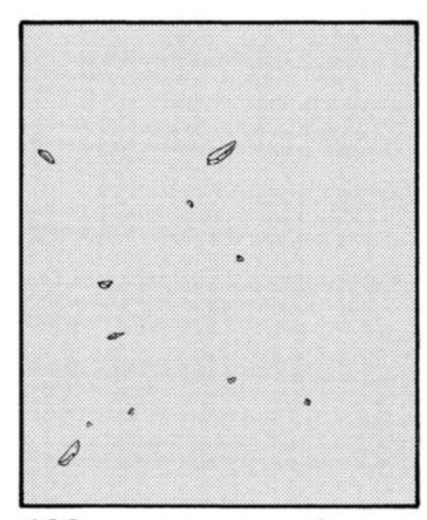


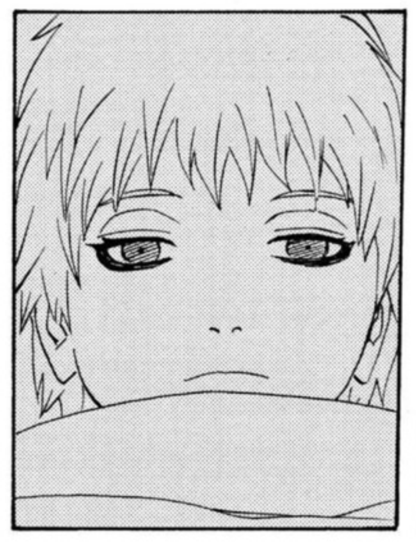
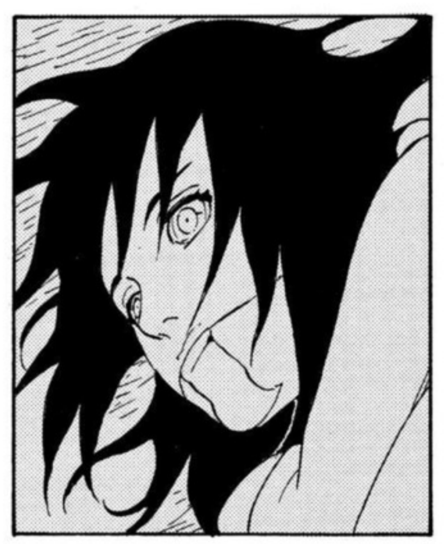




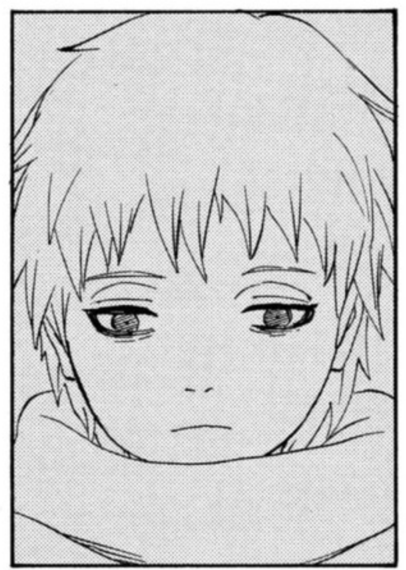

SNIP
SNIP


!



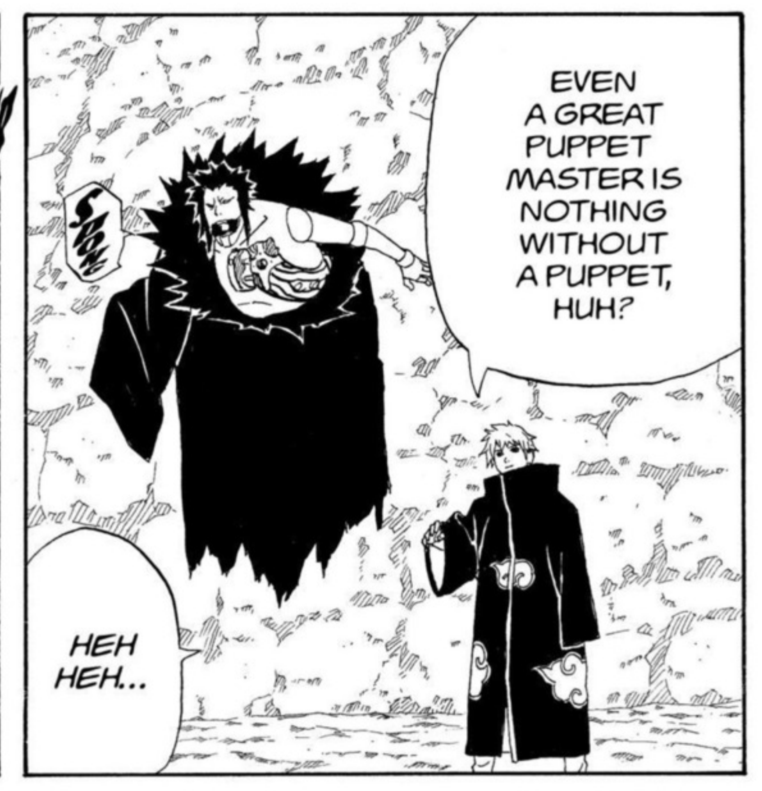





READ
THIS
WAY






...


EVEN A GREAT PUPPET MASTER IS NOTHING WITHOUT A PUPPET, HUH?
HEH HEH...


ZWUR ZWUR ZWUR


ZWUR ZWUR


ZWUR ZWUR ZWUR ZWUR


!!


A PITY I GOT US INTO THIS JAM... INDEED, WHAT NEXT?
WELL, SAKURA... WHATEVER HE'S UP TO, YOU GET OUT OF HERE.








SHIVER
WHAT CAN I DO...? RIGHT NOW...


WHAT...
CLUTCH
SHF

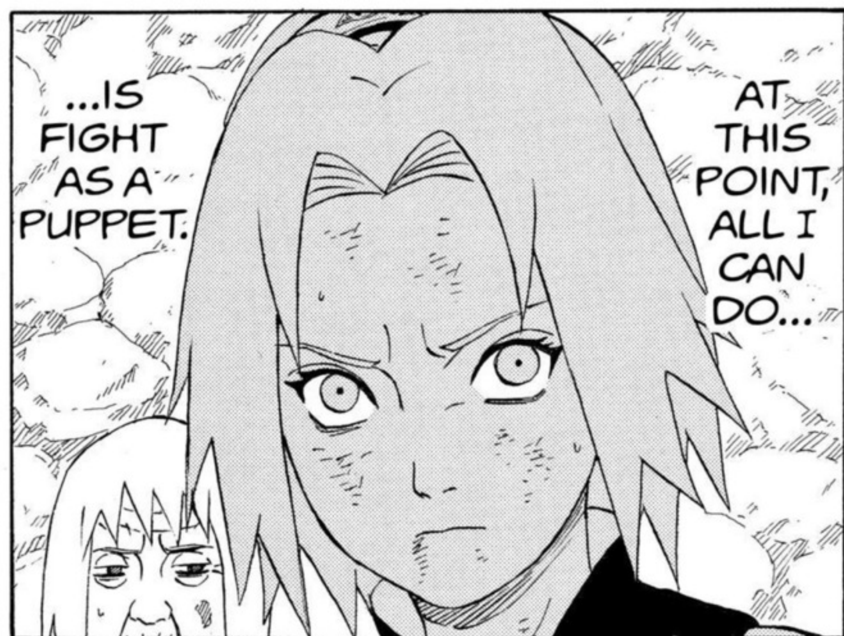

GRIT


!
GRANNY CHIYO...

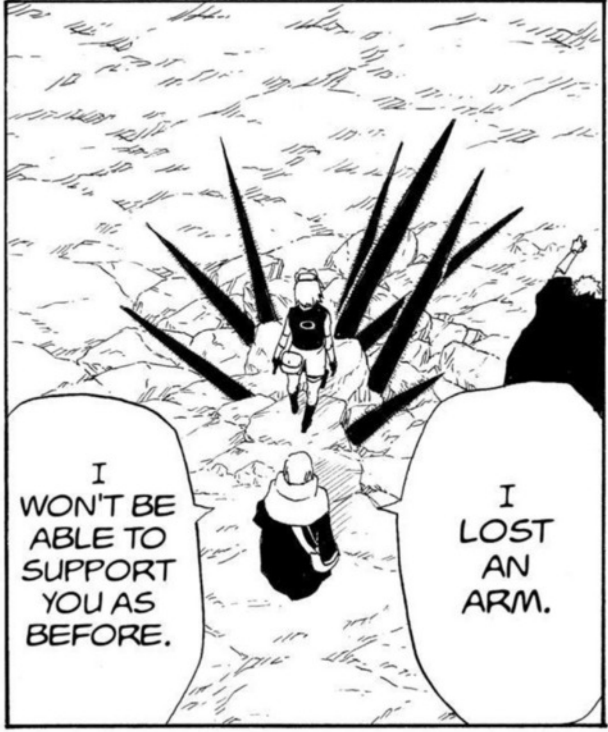

PLEASE USE ME!
SHKK

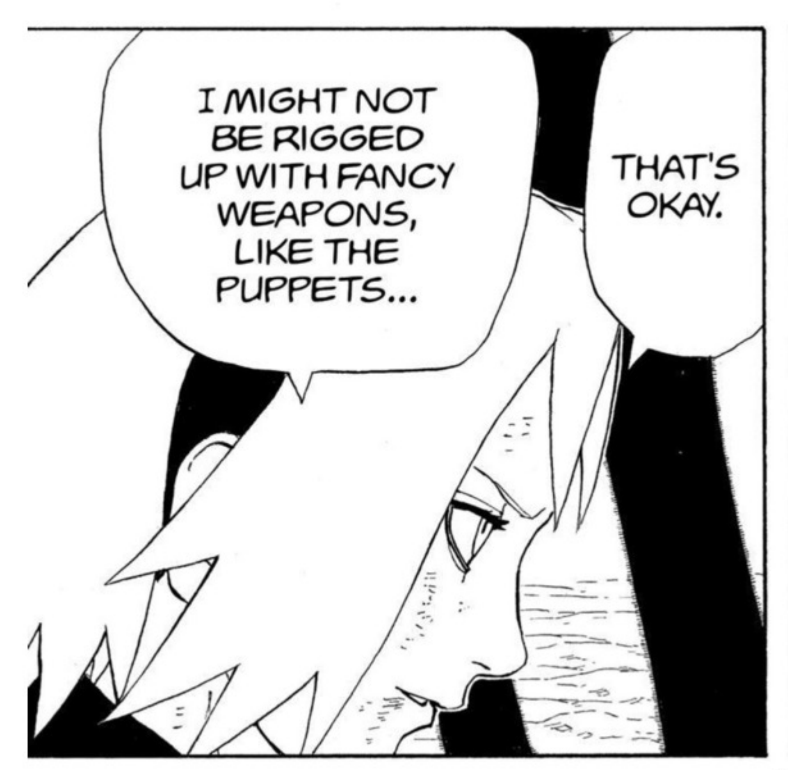

...


READ
THIS
WAY

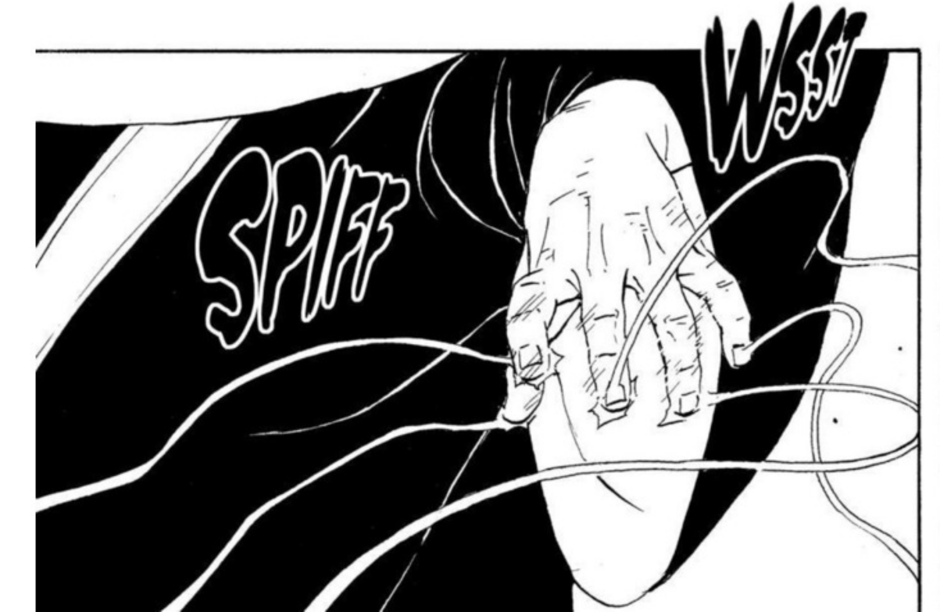

AT THIS POINT, ALL I CAN DO...
...IS FIGHT AS A PUPPET.


...

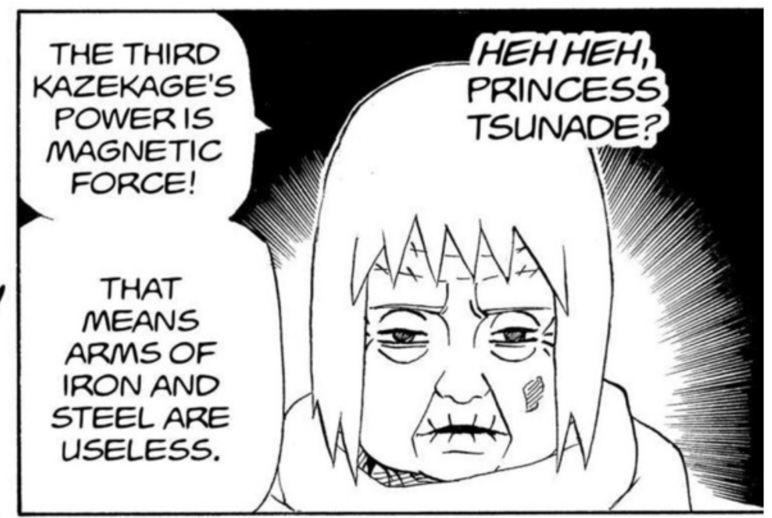

I LOST AN ARM.
I WON'T BE ABLE TO SUPPORT YOU AS BEFORE.


THAT'S OKAY.
I MIGHT NOT BE RIGGED UP WITH FANCY WEAPONS, LIKE THE PUPPETS...


...


WSST
SPIFF

BUT WHAT HAS BEEN HAMMERED INTO ME...
...IS THE UNBENDING SPIRIT OF MY MASTER!
PLAP
PLAP
PLAP

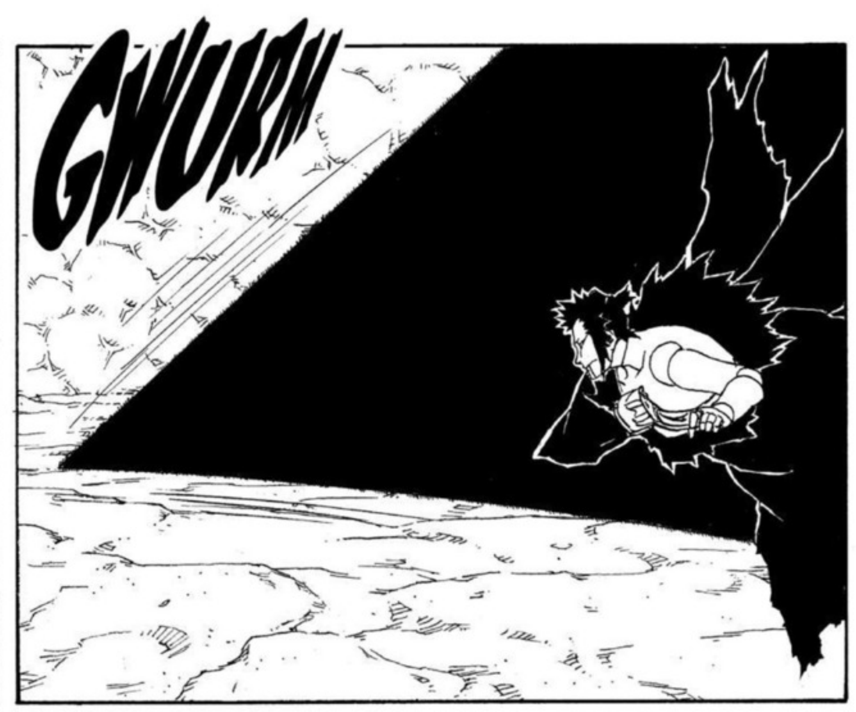






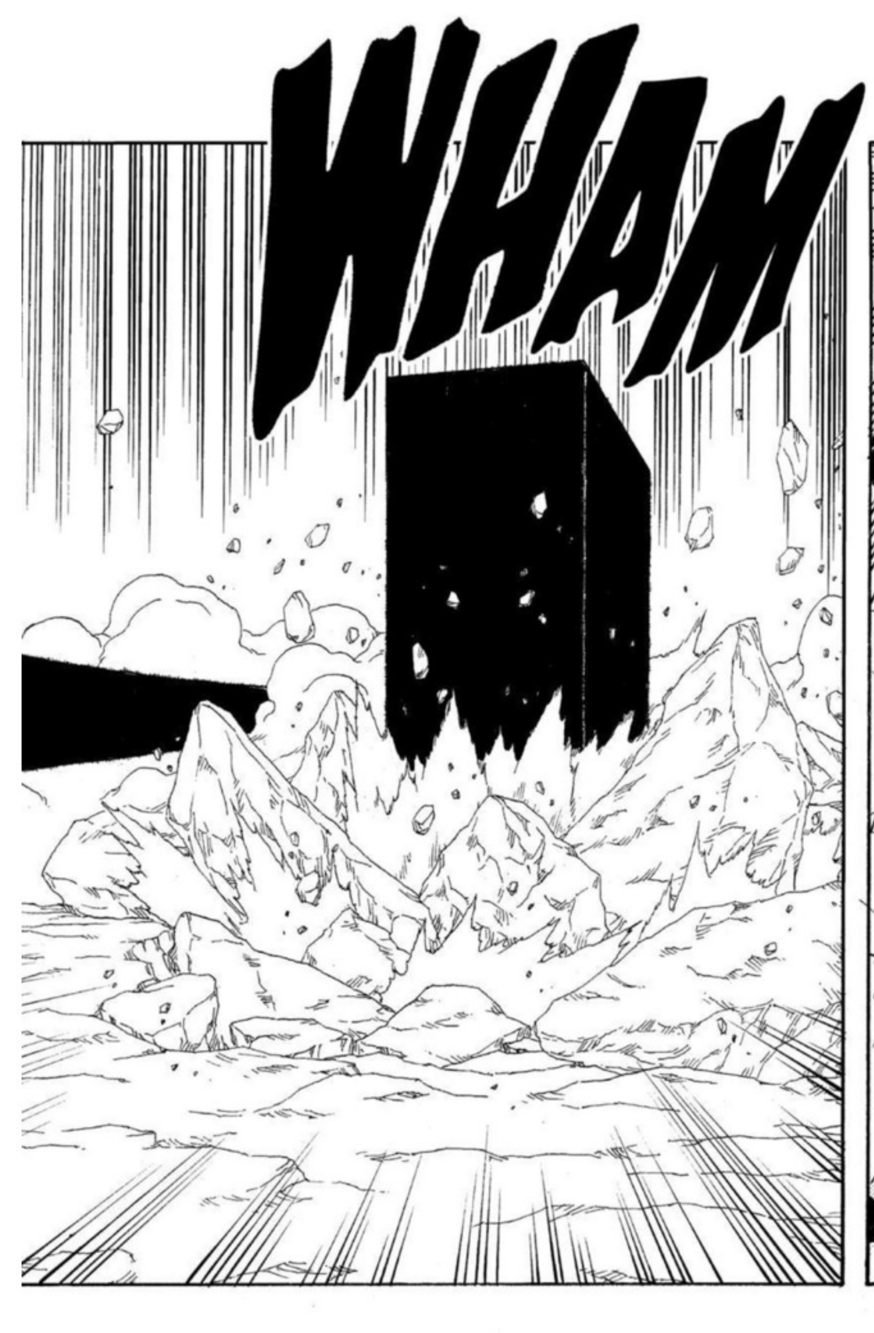

ZOOM


FWISH


GWURM


SHWEE


BA-
KOO
BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BA
BA DOOM
!


WHAM

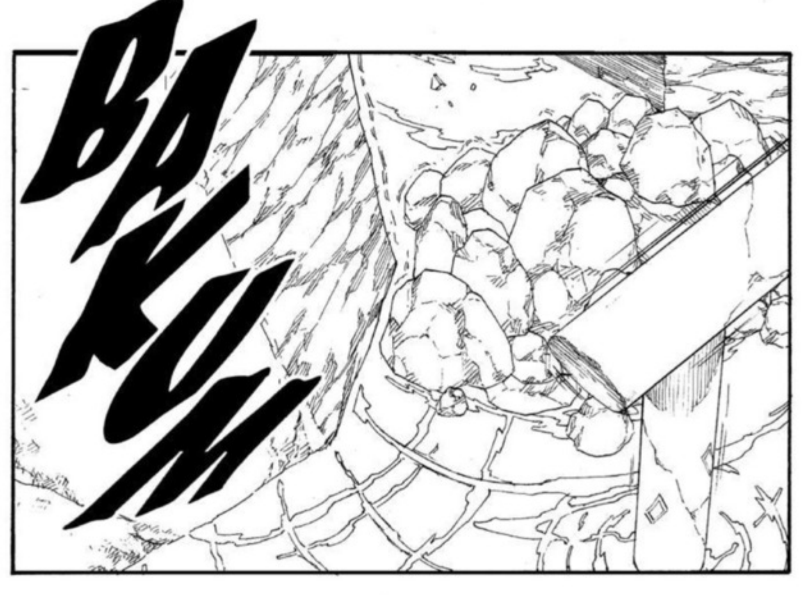


SHKK

FUMP

FOOSH
HERE I COME!
BAMM
!


READ
THIS
WAY

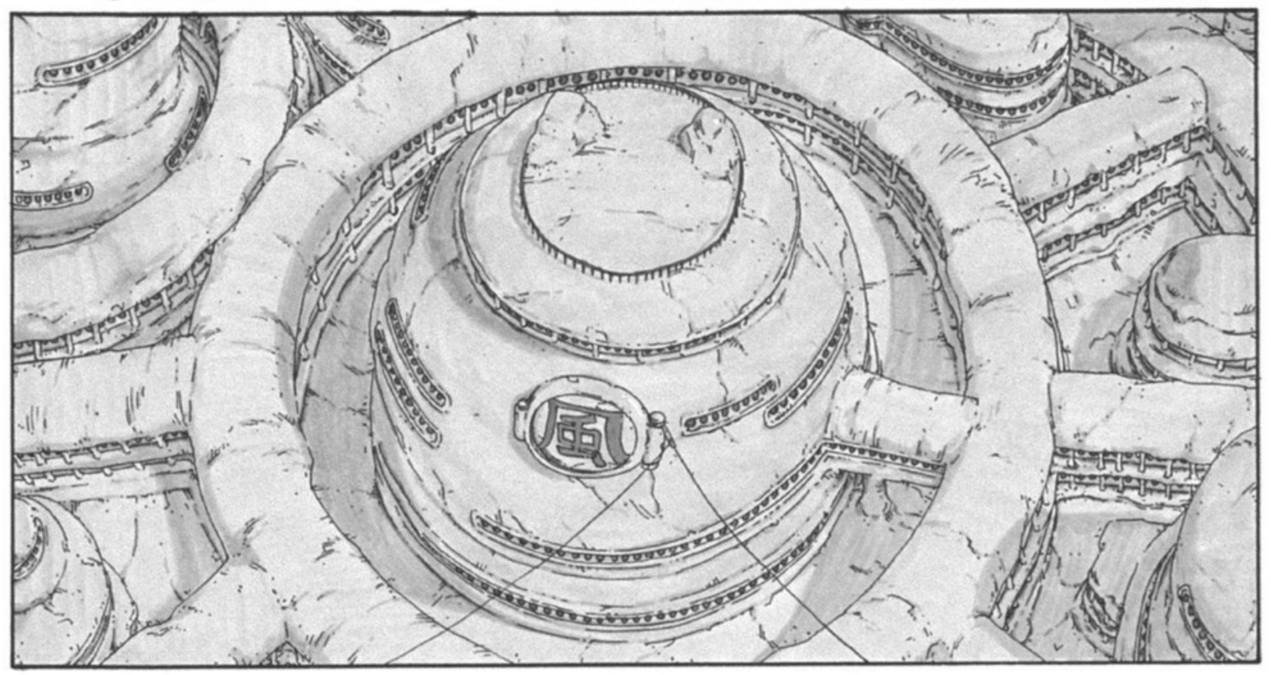

BAKUM

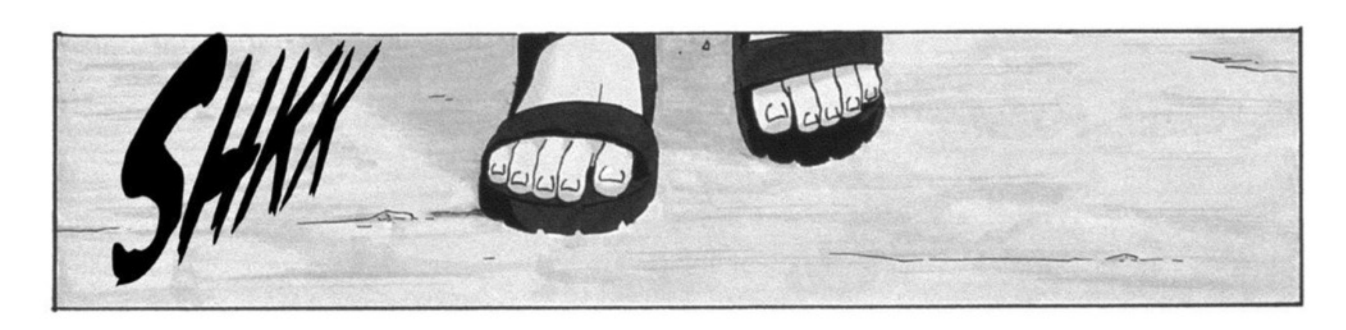

THAT GIRL...


AND THAT'S JUST THE BEGIN-NING!!

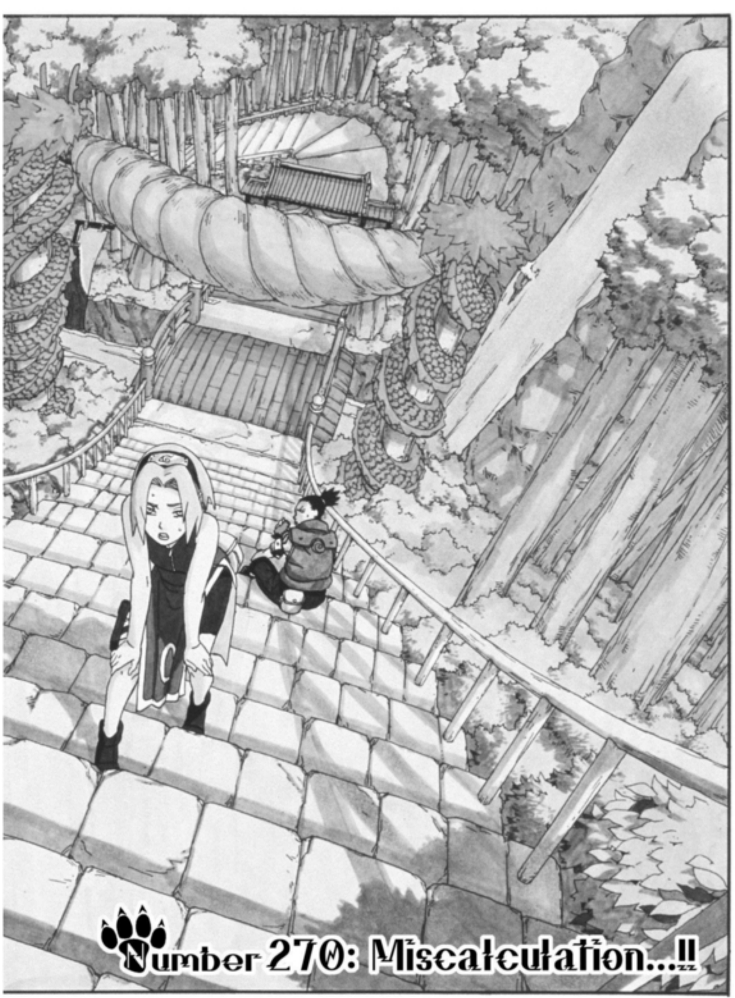

NARUTO

Number 270: Miscalculation...!!



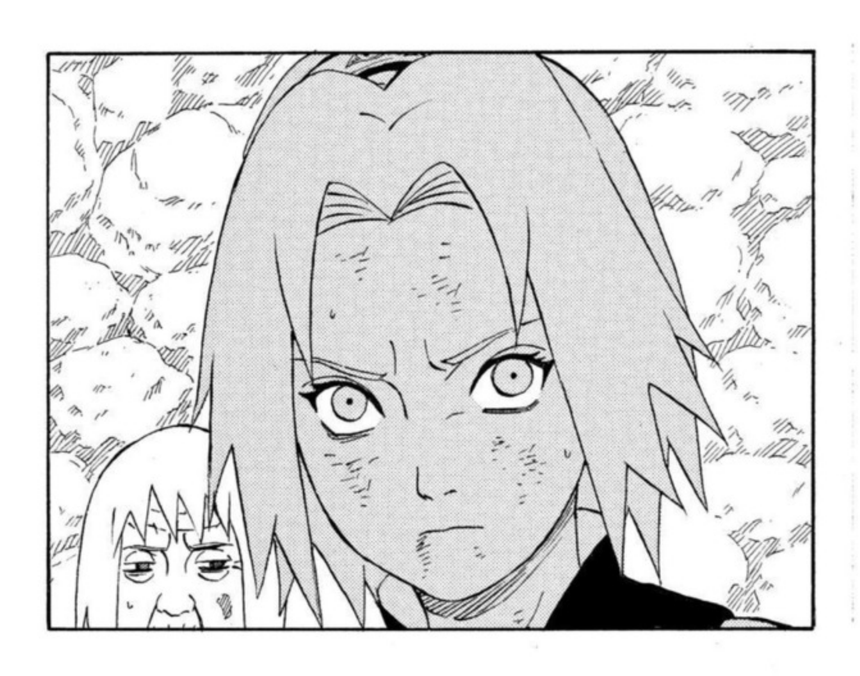






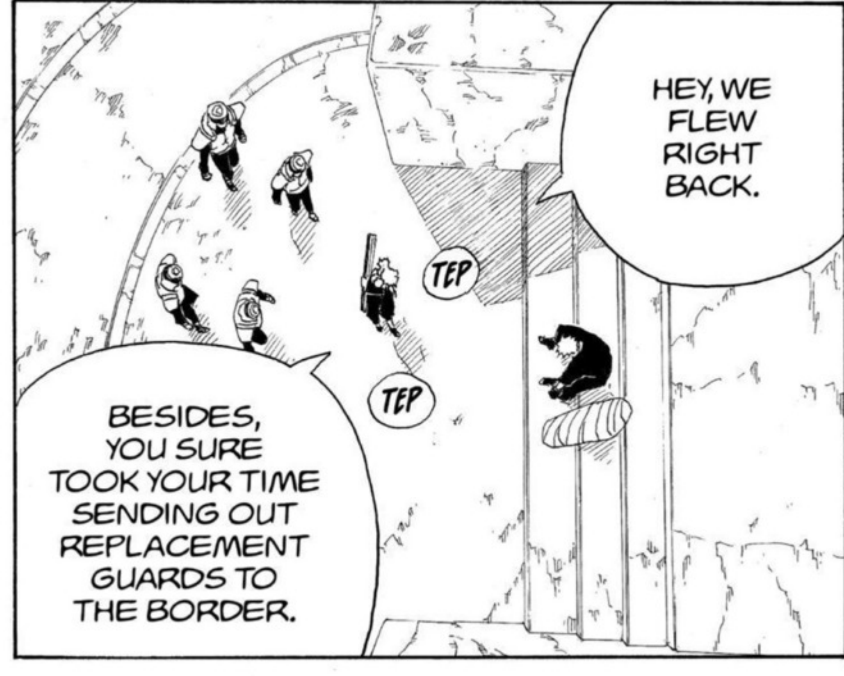
Number 270: Miscalculation...!!






READ
THIS
WAY


WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?


HEY, WE FLEW RIGHT BACK.
TEP
TEP
BESIDES, YOU SURE TOOK YOUR TIME SENDING OUT REPLACEMENT GUARDS TO THE BORDER.


IF ANY-ONE'S TO BLAME HERE...
HUF
HUF


HEY! BUT I'M STILL RECOVERING.
SO LET'S DROP IT OKAY?
AND YET I DID ALL YOU ASKED OF ME.


HMPH...
WSST

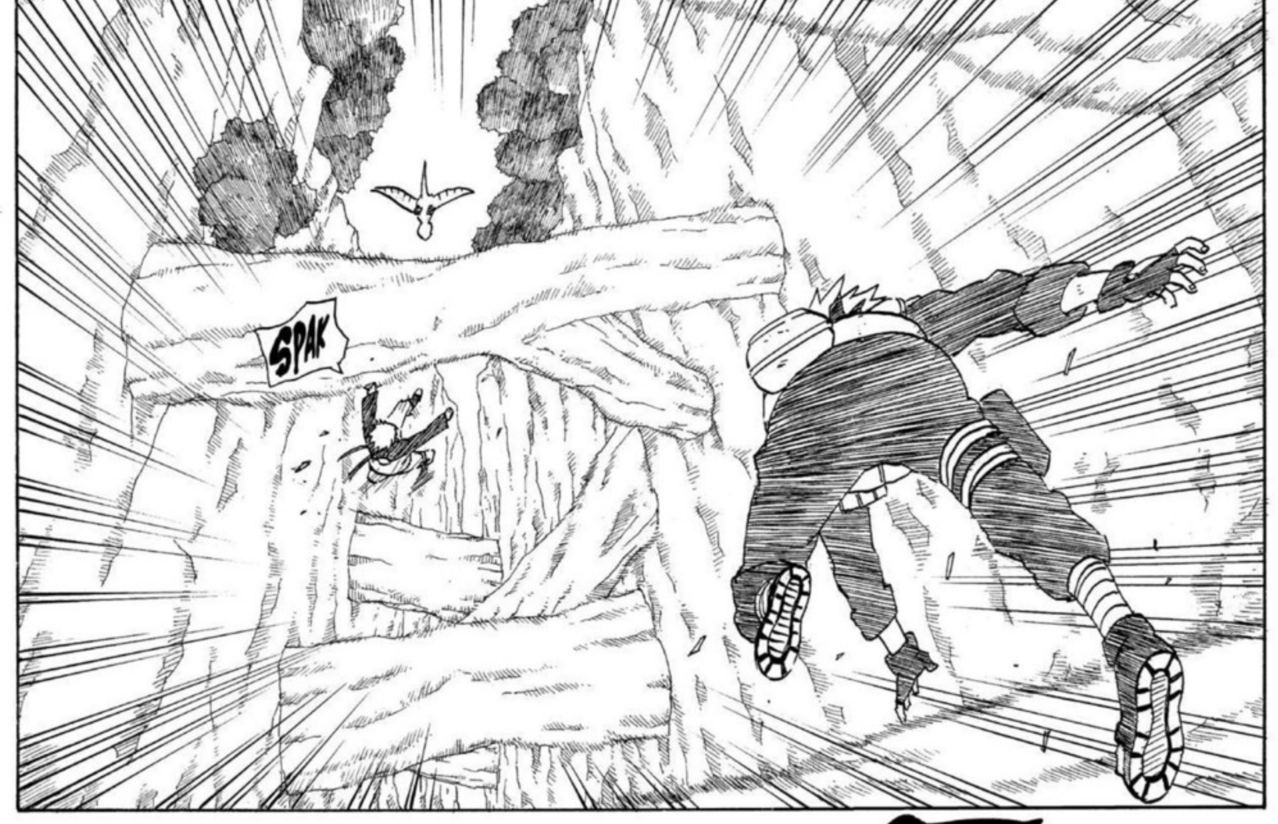
SHF

RIGHT, THEN...

LET'S MOVE ON, SHALL WE?

NARUTO, WAIT!

STAY CLOSE TO ME!!


SPAK


FOOM


OKAY... SO I PLEDGED TO TAKE ON THE JINCHÛRIKI HOST, BUT I'M OUT OF CLAY BOMBS.
AND NOW I'VE THIS MIRROR NINJA, KAKASHI, TO DEAL WITH.


TUP
WHAT TO DO? HMM...


WE'VE STRAYED TOO FAR FROM SAKURA AND THE REST.
WE'RE WAY OUT OF WIRE-LESS RANGE...

WE CAN'T DRAG THIS OUT...

I'D BETTER USE IT AND SETTLE THIS NOW.

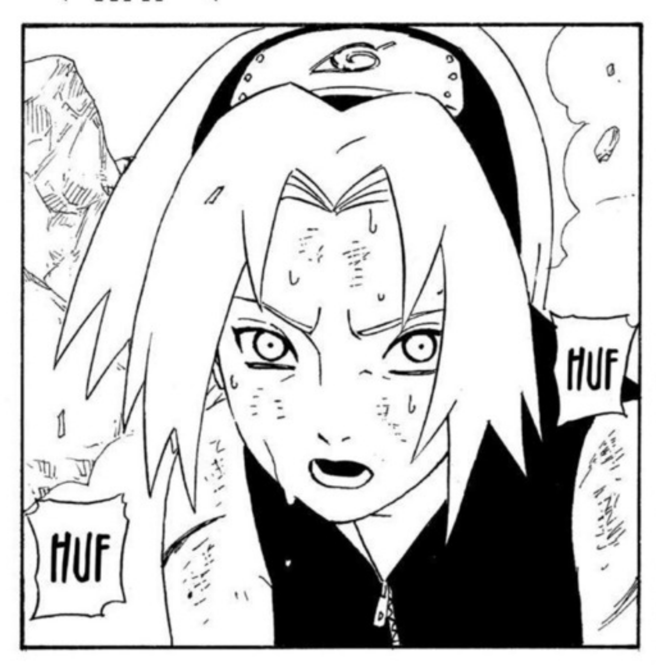
PAKUM PUM PUM

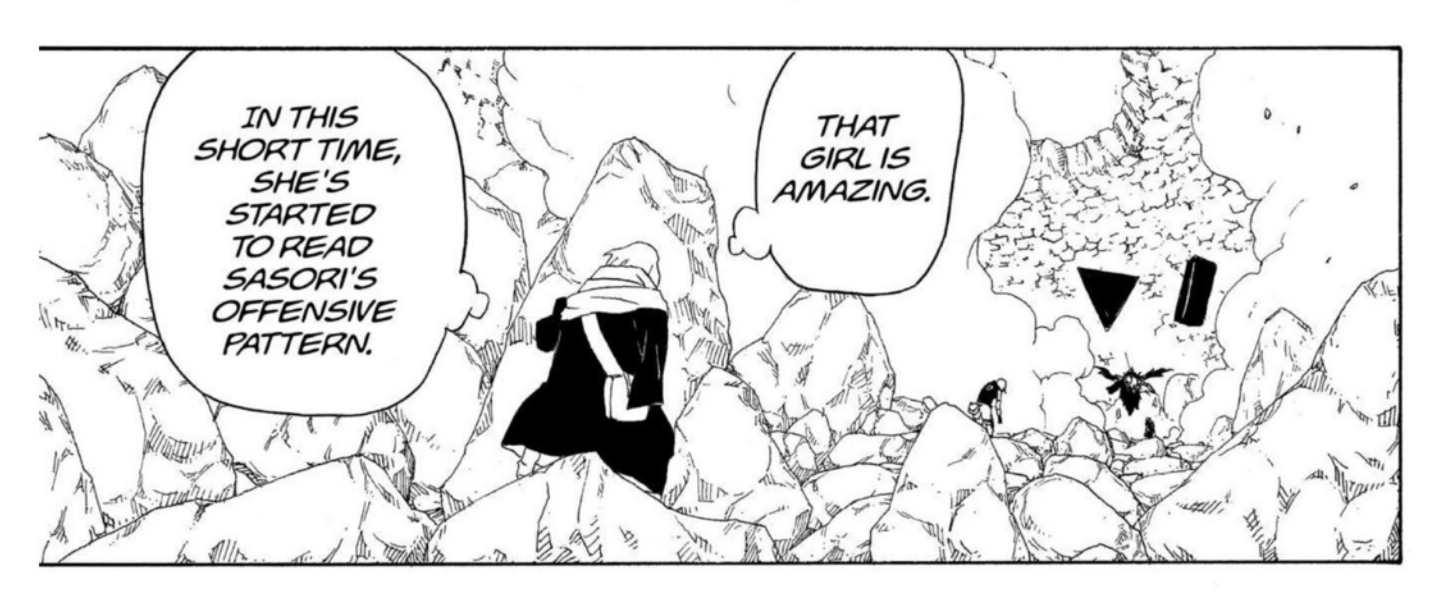
SPLORSH

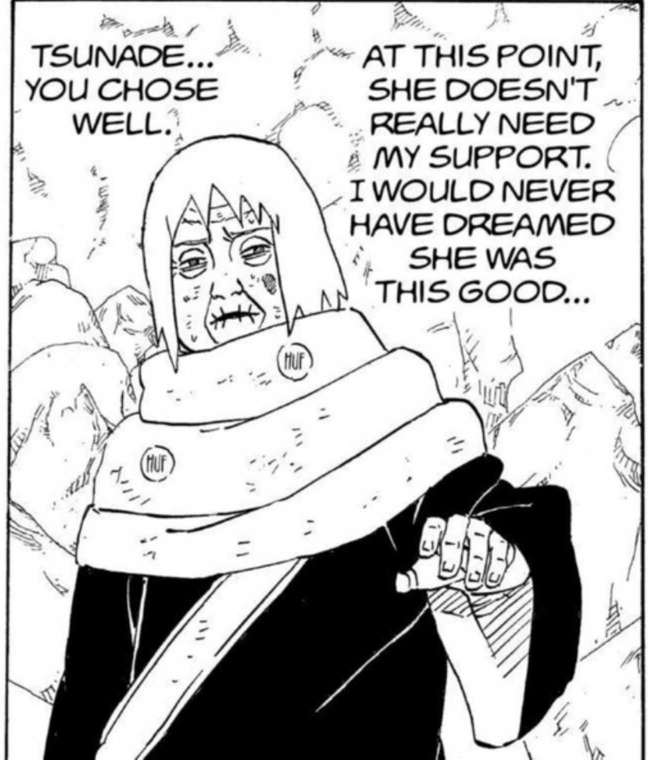
SPLORSH


READ
THIS
WAY

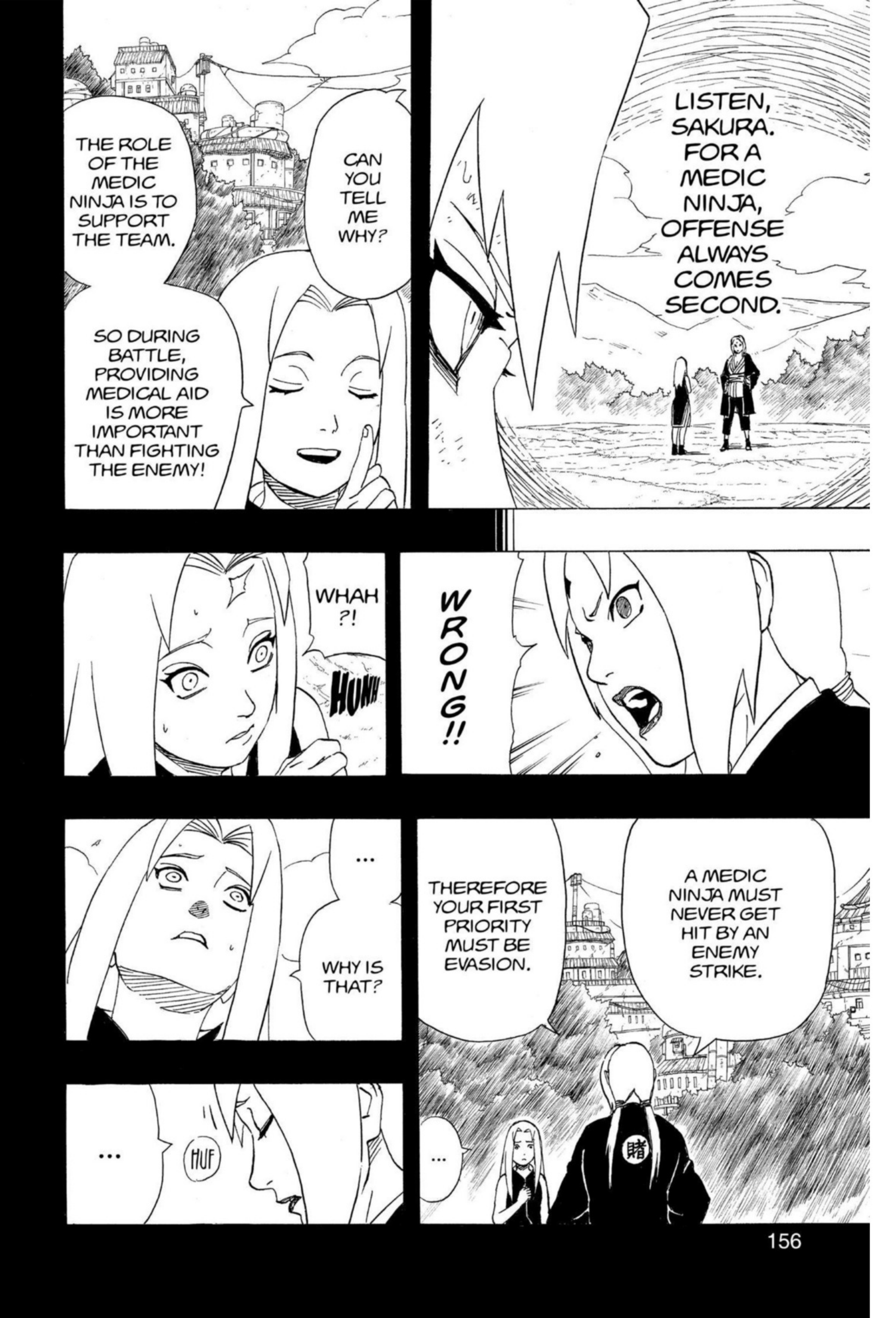

CRUMBLE
QUITE A BIG PUNCH FOR A LITTLE GIRL.


HUF
HUF

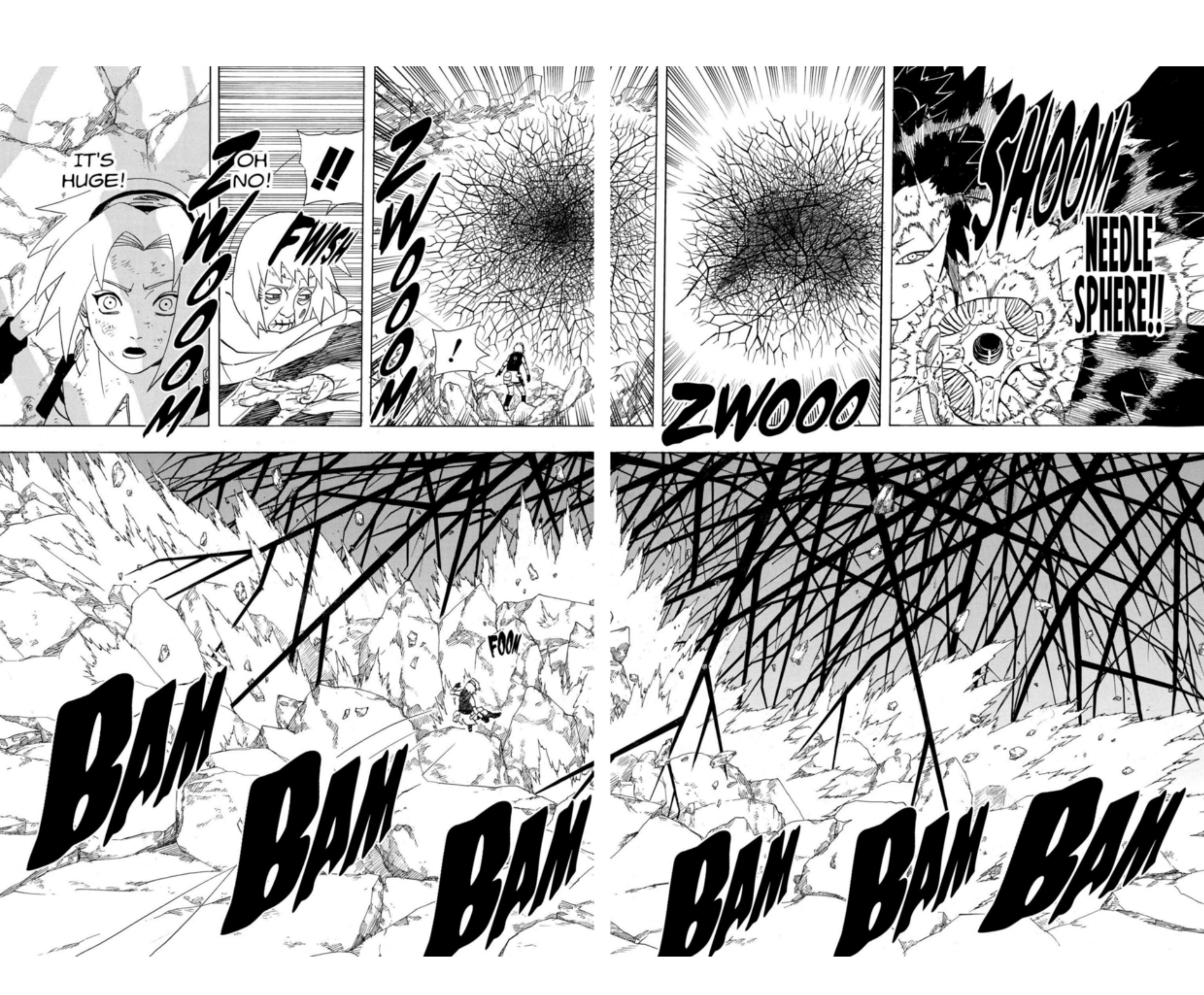

THAT GIRL IS AMAZING.
IN THIS SHORT TIME, SHE'S STARTED TO READ SASORI'S OFFENSIVE PATTERN.


AT THIS POINT, SHE DOESN'T REALLY NEED MY SUPPORT. I WOULD NEVER HAVE DREAMED SHE WAS THIS GOOD...
TSUNADE... YOU CHOSE WELL.
HUF
HUF


HUF
HUF


LISTEN, SAKURA. FOR A MEDIC NINJA, OFFENSE ALWAYS COMES SECOND.
CAN YOU TELL ME WHY?
THE ROLE OF THE MEDIC NINJA IS TO SUPPORT THE TEAM.
SO DURING BATTLE, PROVIDING MEDICAL AID IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN FIGHTING THE ENEMY!
WRONG!!
WHAH ?!
HUNH
A MEDIC NINJA MUST NEVER GET HIT BY AN ENEMY STRIKE.
THEREFORE YOUR FIRST PRIORITY MUST BE EVASION.
...
...
WHY IS THAT?
HUF
...

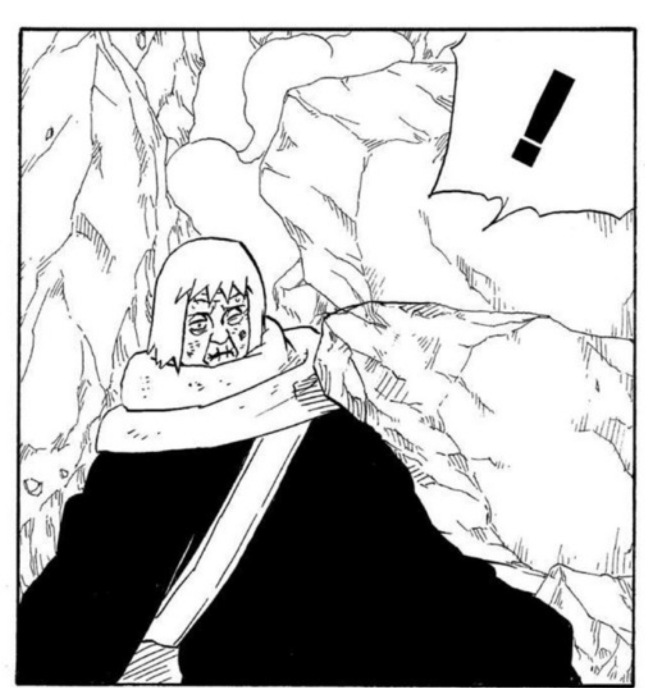

IF A MEDIC NINJA SHOULD DIE...
WHO WOULD TREAT THE INJURED?
NOW. I WILL ATTACK YOU IN EARNEST.
DURING THIS SESSION, YOU MUST DODGE ALL MY ATTACKS.
I WON'T GO EASY ON YOU.
FROM HIS HAND AND ARM GESTURES, I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE DIRECTION OF HIS ATTACKS...
BEFORE HE CAN STRIKE, HE MUST MOVE HIS FINGER. THAT'S THE WEAKNESS OF A PUPPET MASTER.
HUF
HUF
THE GIRL IS A HAWK. AT THIS RATE, I COULD BE HERE FOREVER.
I GUESS I HAVE TO WASTE SOME CHAKRA. THIS SHOULD FINISH HER OFF.
FWISH
DLO
FF



SHOOM!
NEEDLE SPHERE!!
ZWOOO
BAM
BAM
BAM
ZWOOOM
!
!!
OH NO!
FWISH
ZWOOOM
IT'S HUGE!
FOOM
BAM
BAM
BAM


SHAKUNK KSSH


THP


!


...!



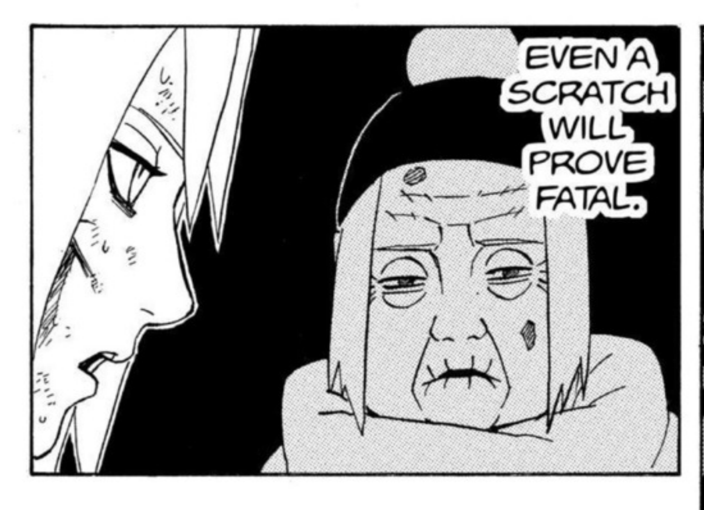

SAKURA!!


READ
THIS
WAY


SAKURA! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!


PLIP PLIP


HUF
HUF


EVEN A SCRATCH WILL PROVE FATAL.


FWIW


!!
SHE'S INJURED!


THE IRON SAND IS SOAKED IN POISON!


I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I?
THAT THERE WAS MORE TO IT?


!


THOP


HEH... THE POISON IS STARTING ITS WORK.
IT NUMBS THE BODY PRETTY RAPIDLY.
LEFT ALONE, SHE MAY LAST... THREE DAYS.


THUD


FWOO
BUT I'LL FINISH HER NOW.
SH
!
I'M STUCK ...
MMG
SHING

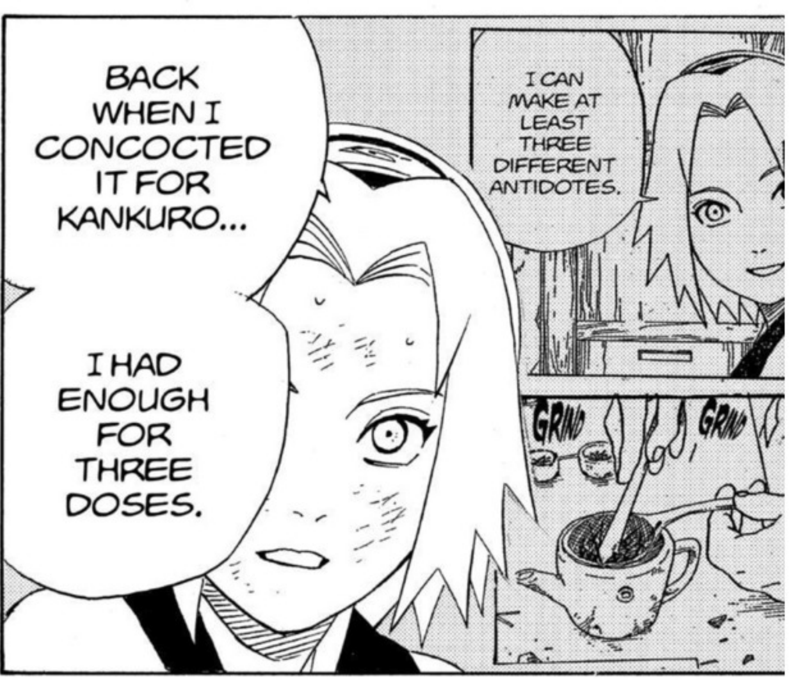

SHRAKK


READ
THIS
WAY

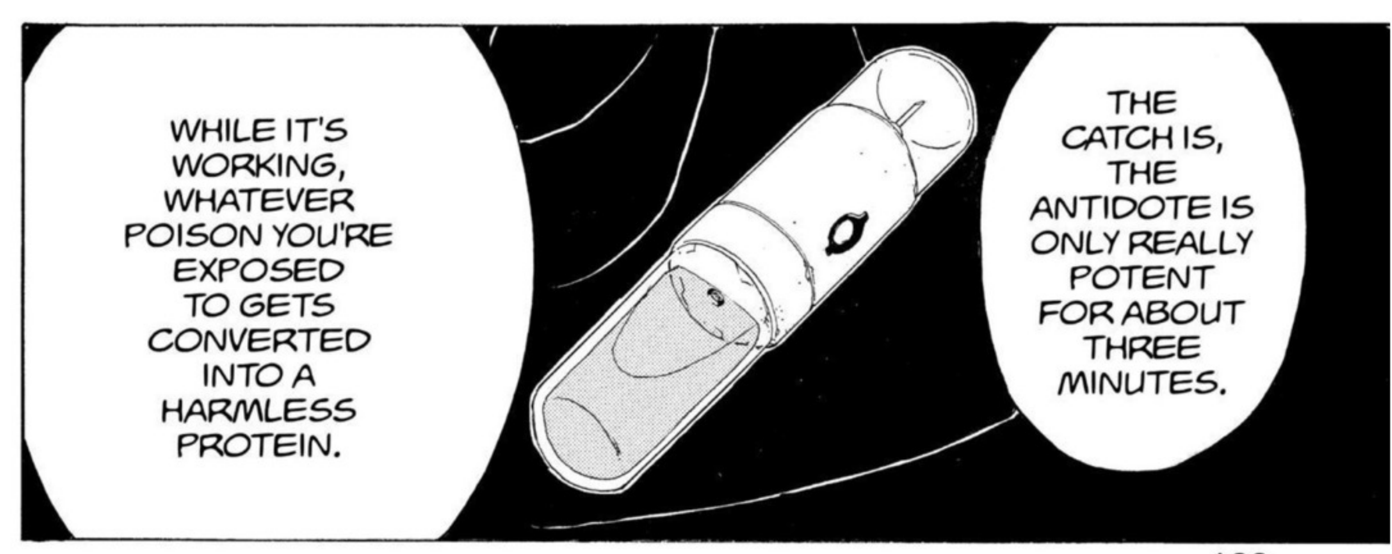
KISSH
SH ISSH
SAKURA... HOW...
KRUNK
TAKK


I USED THE ANTIDOTE...
SHF
THERE'S ONE LEFT.
GRANNY CHIYO, I WANT YOU TO KEEP IT.


BUT WHEN...


I CAN MAKE AT LEAST THREE DIFFERENT ANTIDOTES.
GRIND GRIND
BACK WHEN I CONCOCTED IT FOR KANKURO...
I HAD ENOUGH FOR THREE DOSES.


I KNEW OUR ADVERSARY USED POISON...
I BROUGHT ALONG THE REST, IN HYPODERMIC FORM.
OH... I SEE...


THE CATCH IS, THE ANTIDOTE IS ONLY REALLY POTENT FOR ABOUT THREE MINUTES.
WHILE IT'S WORKING, WHATEVER POISON YOU'RE EXPOSED TO GETS CONVERTED INTO A HARMLESS PROTEIN.


READ THIS WAY


I DIDN'T WANT SASORI TO KNOW I HAD IT...
SSSSS


I FIGURED HIS GUARD WOULD BE LOWEST AFTER HE'D PLAYED HIS FINAL CARD. THAT IT'D BE OUR ONLY CHANCE.
SO I HAD TO HANG ON TO IT UNTIL THE VERY LAST MOMENT.

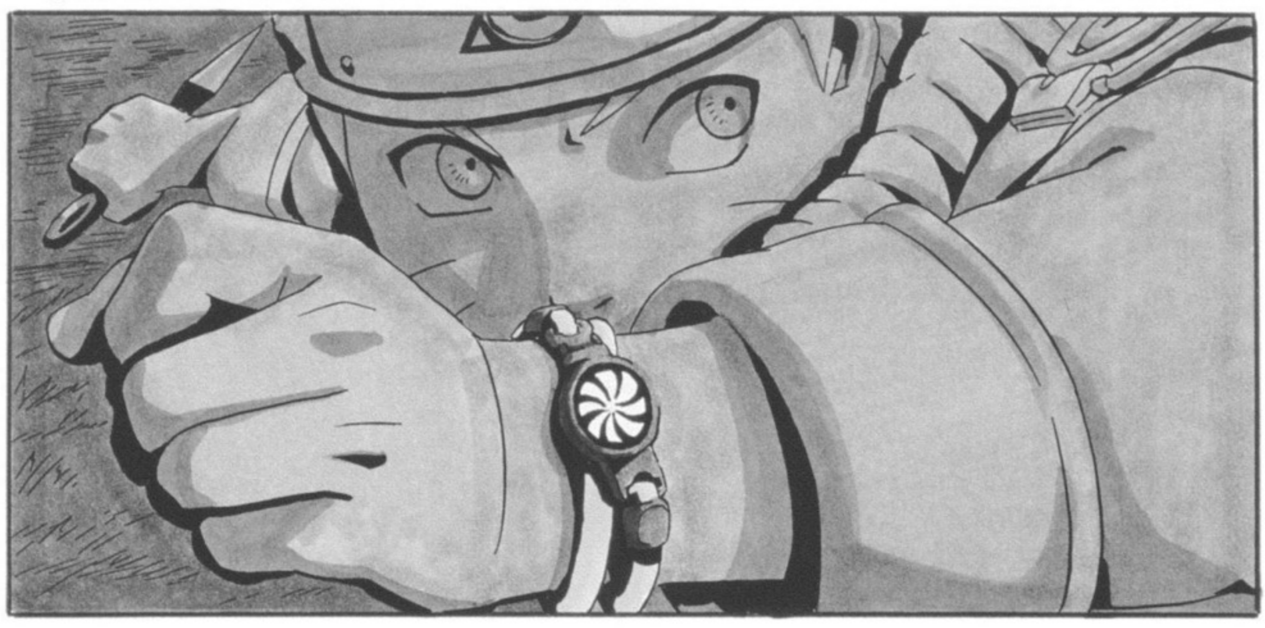

FOR THE NEXT THREE MINUTES OR SO, HIS POISON WON'T AFFECT ME.
WE ONLY HAVE THIS CHANCE!

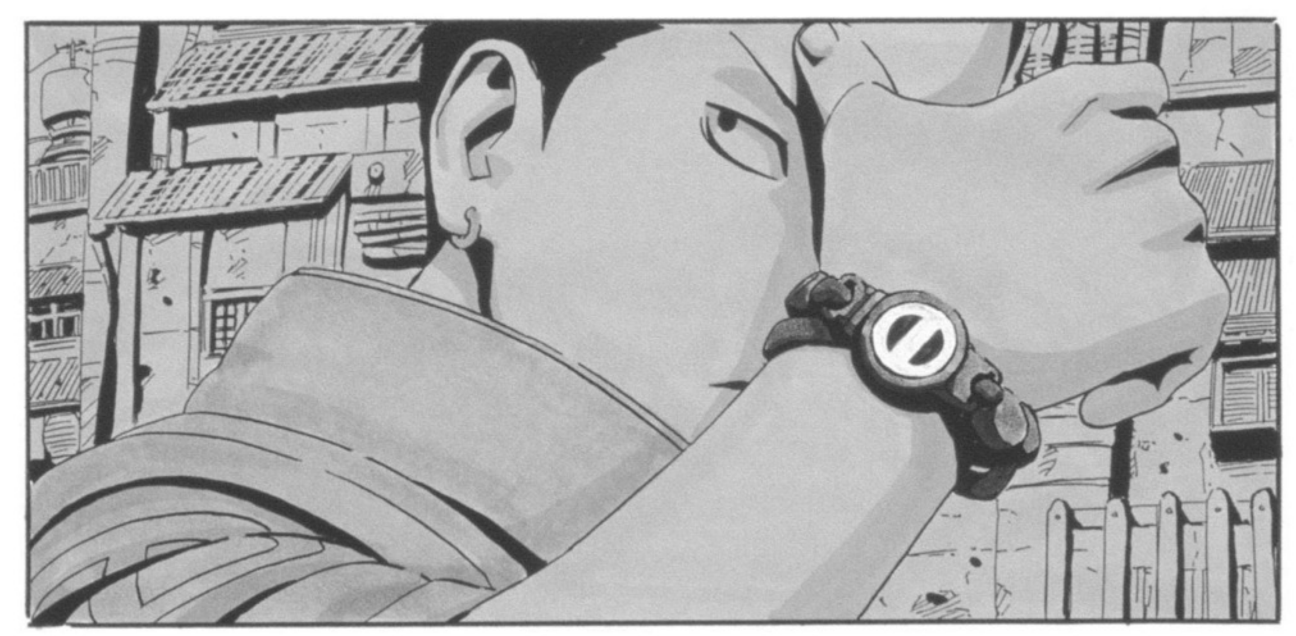

...


UNDER-STOOD.
IT'S TIME TO END THIS FIGHT.


NARUTO

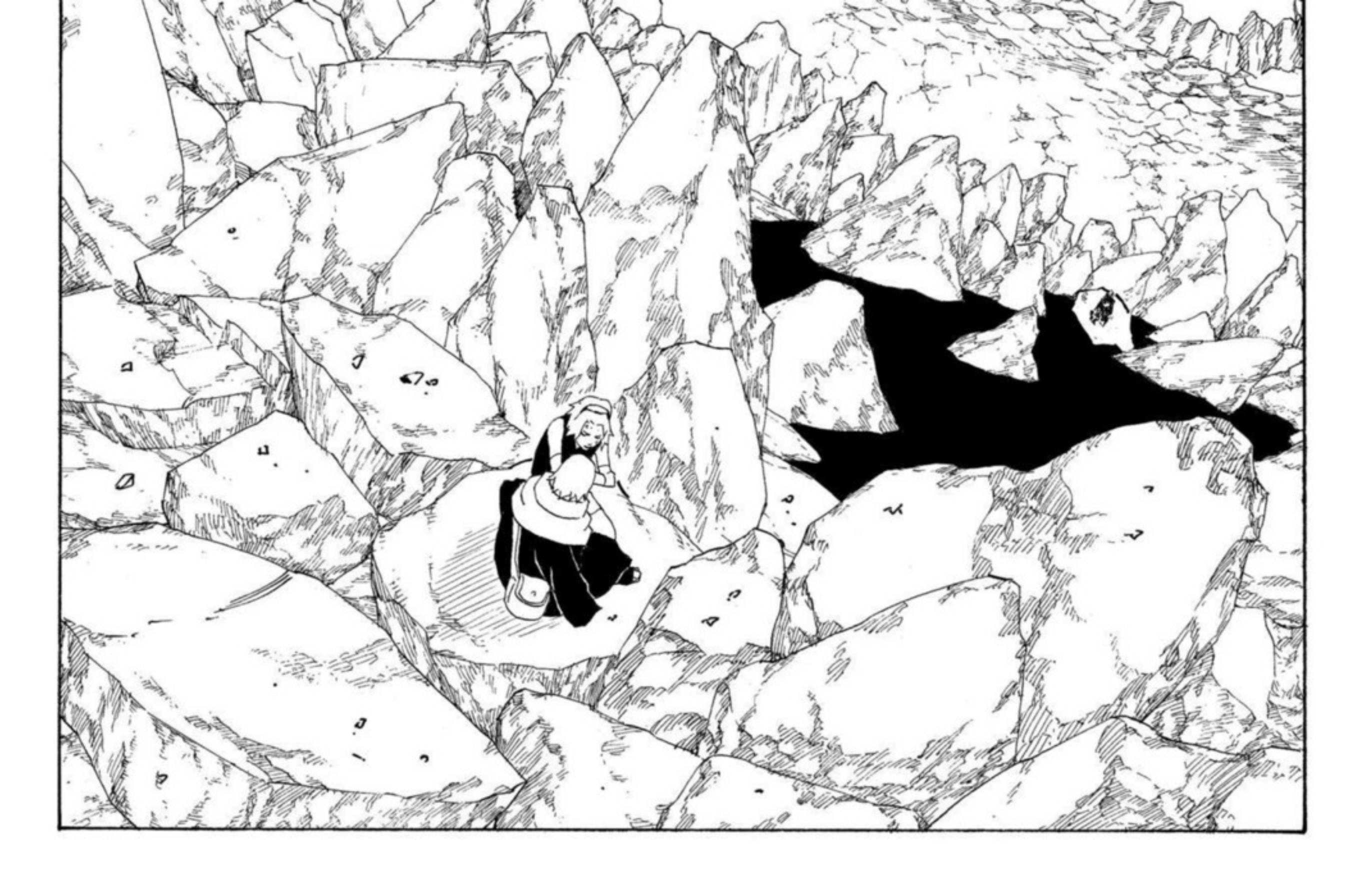
Number 271: Unknown Power...!!









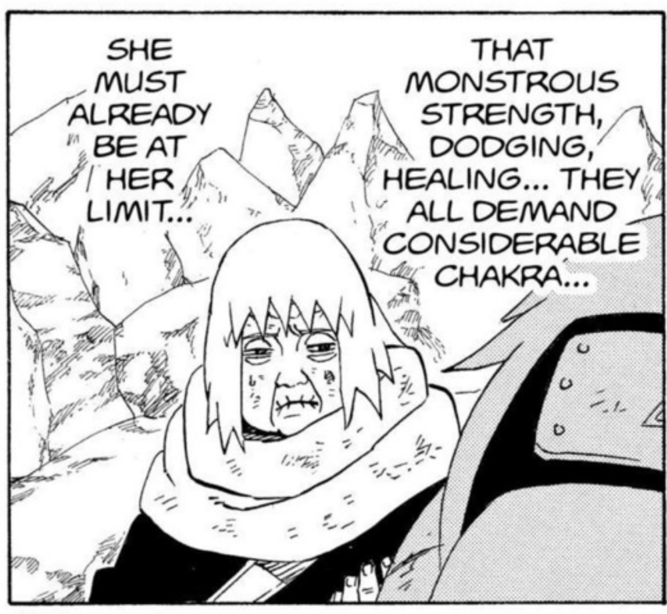




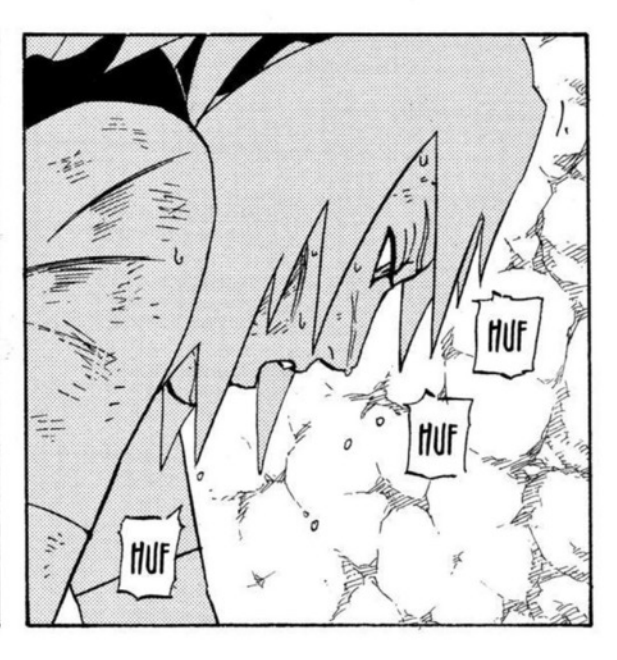
PAM



SAKURA, MY HAND IS FINE NOW.
SSSSS
GRIP

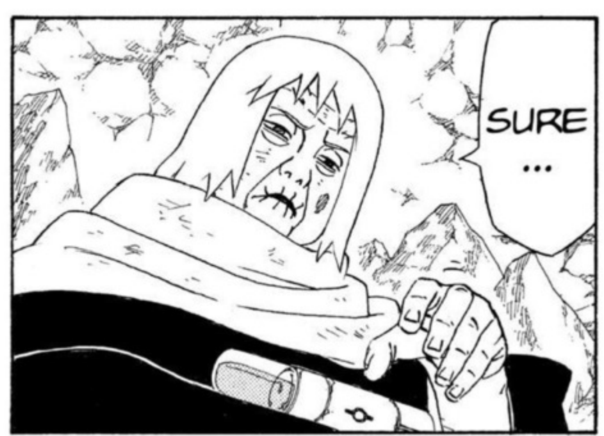


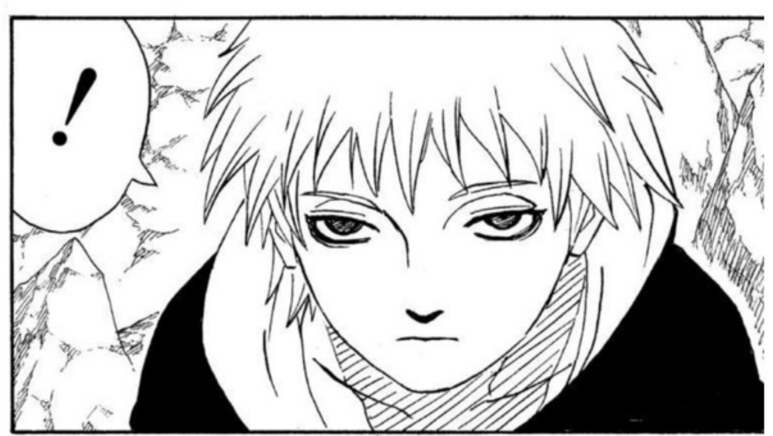
THAT MONSTROUS STRENGTH, DODGING, HEALING... THEY ALL DEMAND CONSIDERABLE CHAKRA...
SHE MUST ALREADY BE AT HER LIMIT...



HUF
HUF
HUF

...
CAN WE START NOW, GRANNY CHIYO?
SHK
WE HAVE NO TIME...


SURE ...


!

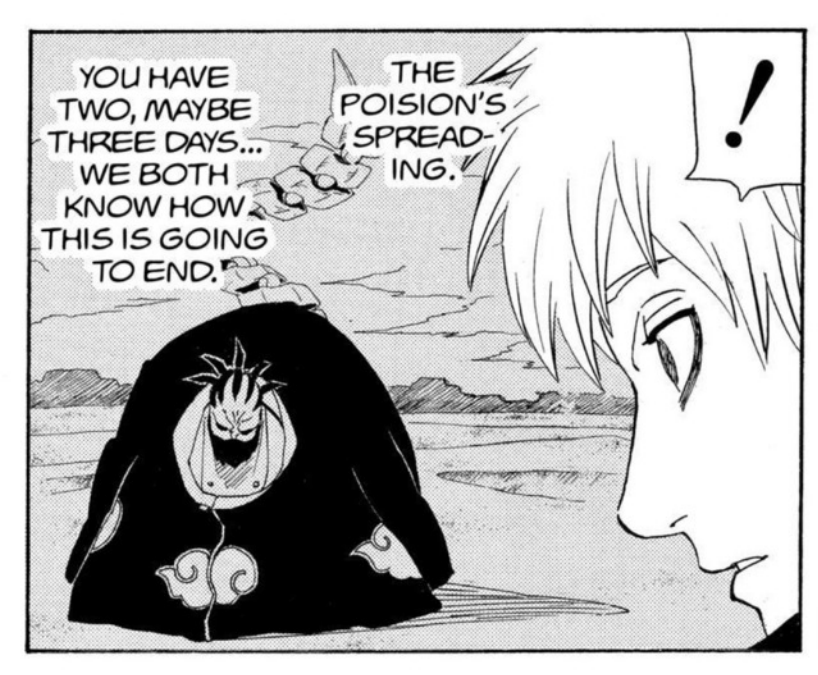

I KNOW MY POISON AFFECTED HER.
HOW CAN SHE MOVE?

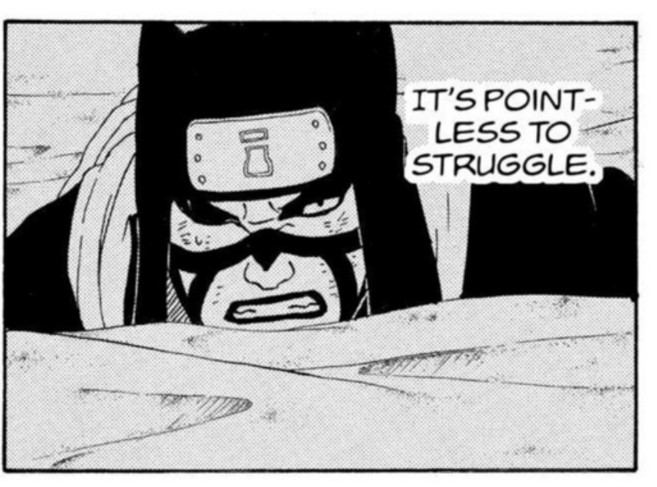

READ THIS WAY


...
HUF
FWIP
HUF


WAIT, NO...
SHE DETOXI-FIED IT!


BUT HOW?!


!
THE POISION'S SPREAD-ING.
YOU HAVE TWO, MAYBE THREE DAYS... WE BOTH KNOW HOW THIS IS GOING TO END.


IT'S POINT-LESS TO STRUGGLE.


COULD *THEY* HAVE USED THAT POISON? NO... IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.


THE ANTIDOTE IS PROHIBITIVELY DIFFICULT TO MIX. IF THERE'S EVEN THE SLIGHTEST MISTAKE... EVEN *I* NEED TO REFERENCE THE MIX RATIO TABLE, AND I *CREATED* IT.
AND YET... WAS IT THE WITCH? NO, I DOUBT THAT...


SO THAT BRAT IS A MEDIC NINJA...




URK...
SHUWA


!


SSSSSS


DID SHE...?



FSSSS

WELL, I STAUNCHED THE MAJOR BLEEDING ANYWAY ...

TIME TO REFOCUS THE REST OF MY CHAKRA TO ATTACK! WE'VE ONLY GOT THREE MINUTES TO DO THIS, AND WE WON'T HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE.

...

SHIVER

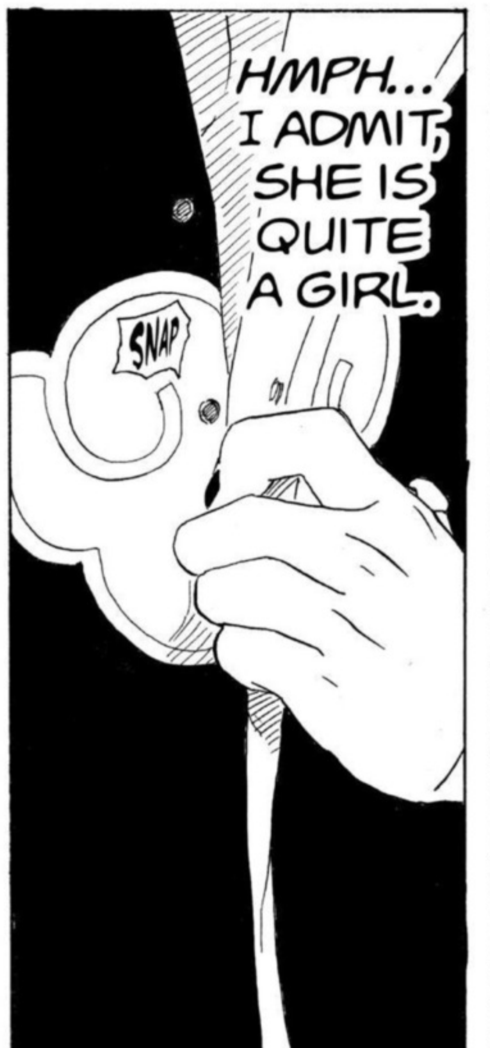
SHF

...

LET'S GO, SAKURA.

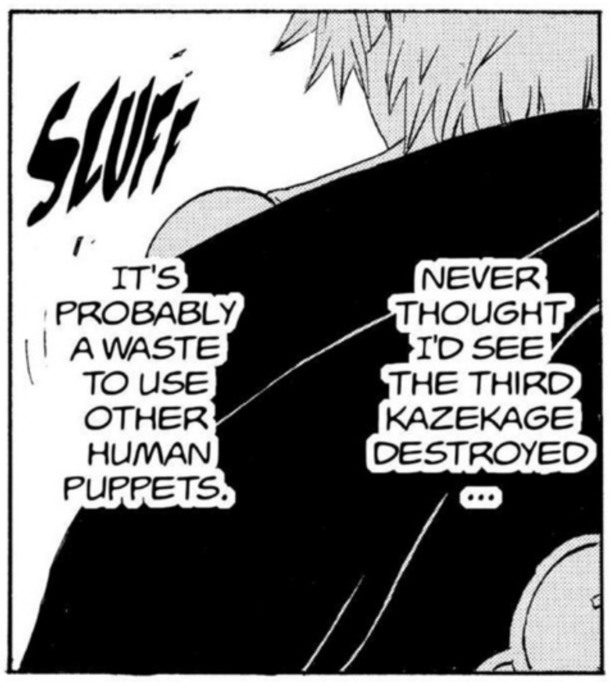
TUG

YES.

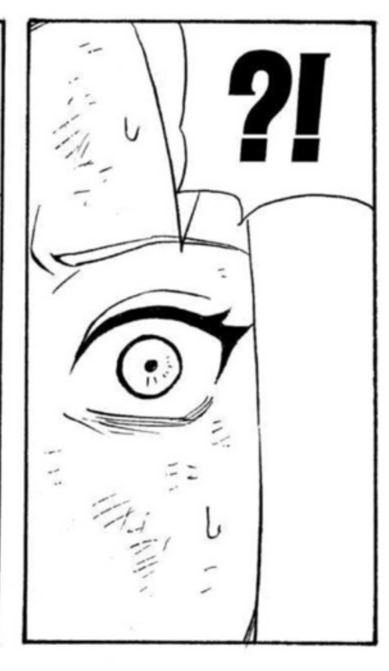





READ THIS WAY

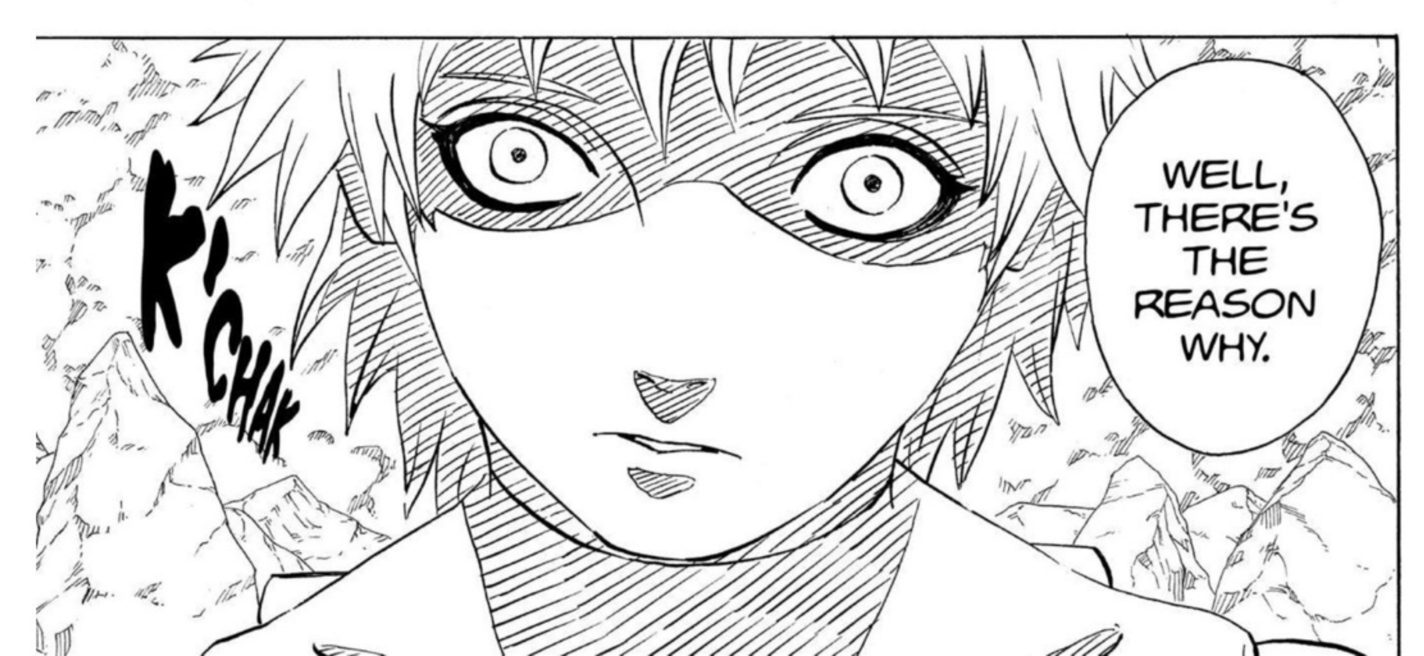

SLUFF
NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THE THIRD KAZEKAGE DESTROYED ...
IT'S PROBABLY A WASTE TO USE OTHER HUMAN PUPPETS.


I HAVEN'T BEEN FORCED TO SOLVE A PROBLEM THIS WAY SINCE I JOINED THE AKATSUKI.
SHFF
I WONDER HOW LONG IT'S BEEN...
FLOP


?!

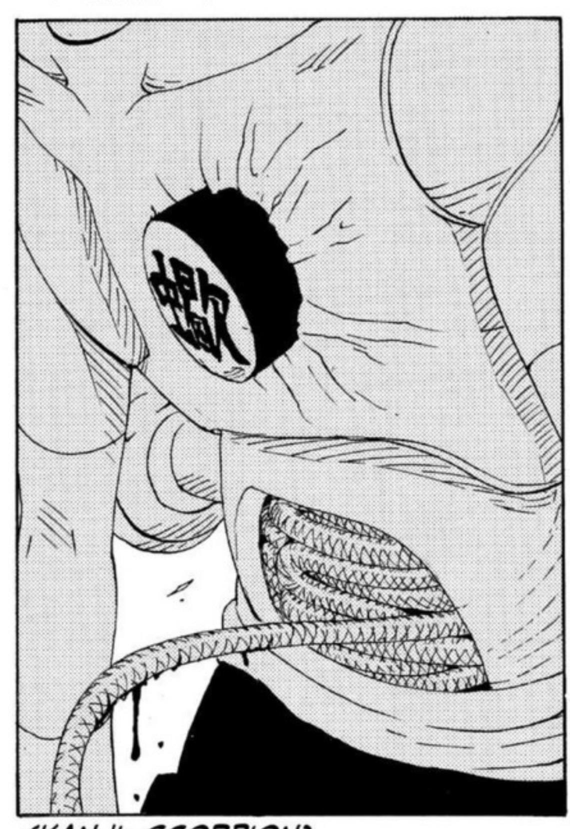

...

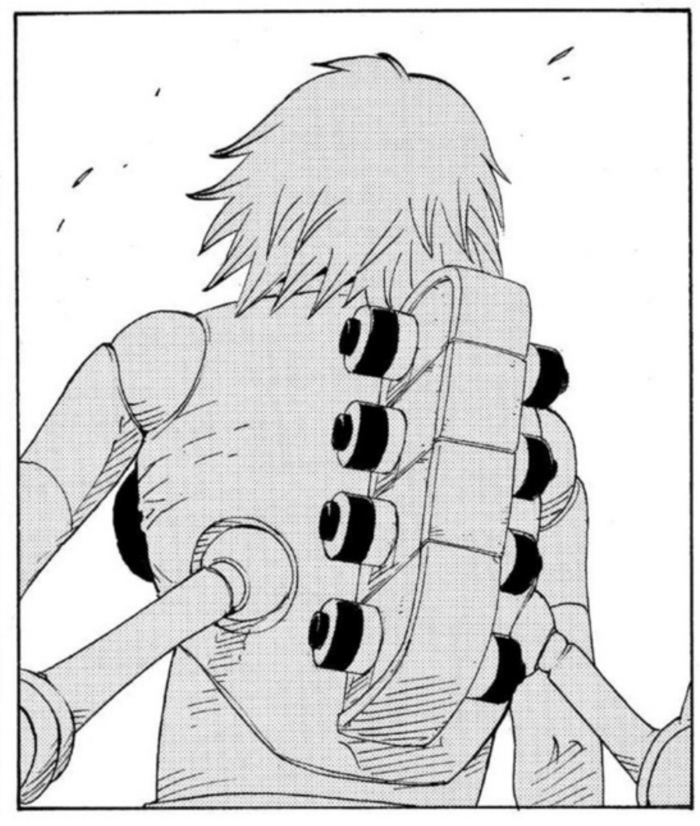

WHA... WHAT IS THAT?!
HE HASN'T AGED AT ALL. HE STILL LOOKS AS HE DID...
...LONG AGO.


K'CHAK
WELL, THERE'S THE REASON WHY.

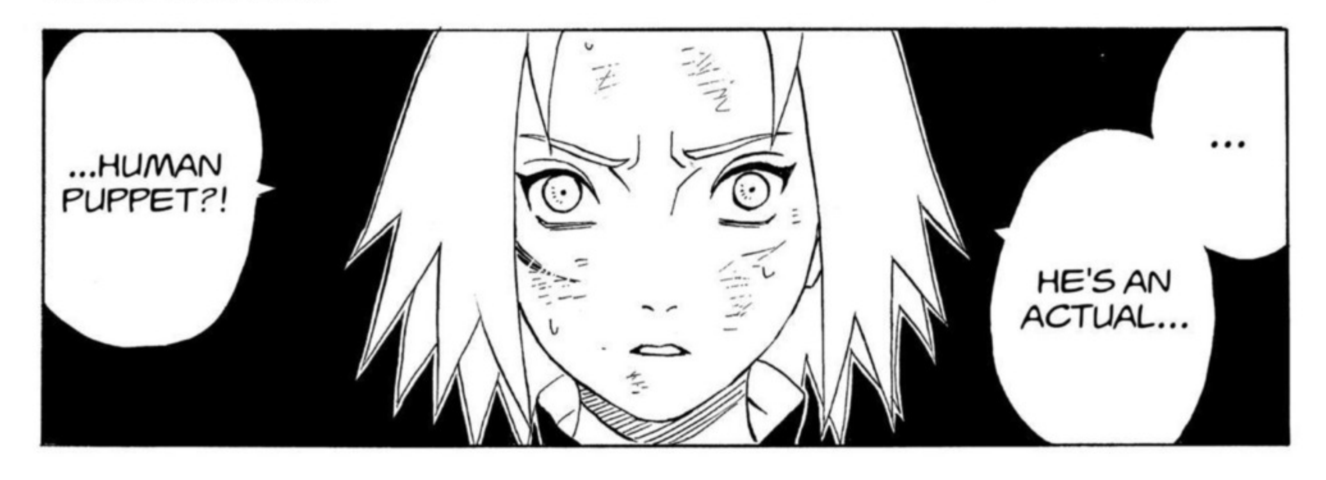

IT'S BEEN A WHILE INDEED... SINCE LAST I USED MYSELF.
K'CHAK
DRUP
DRUP

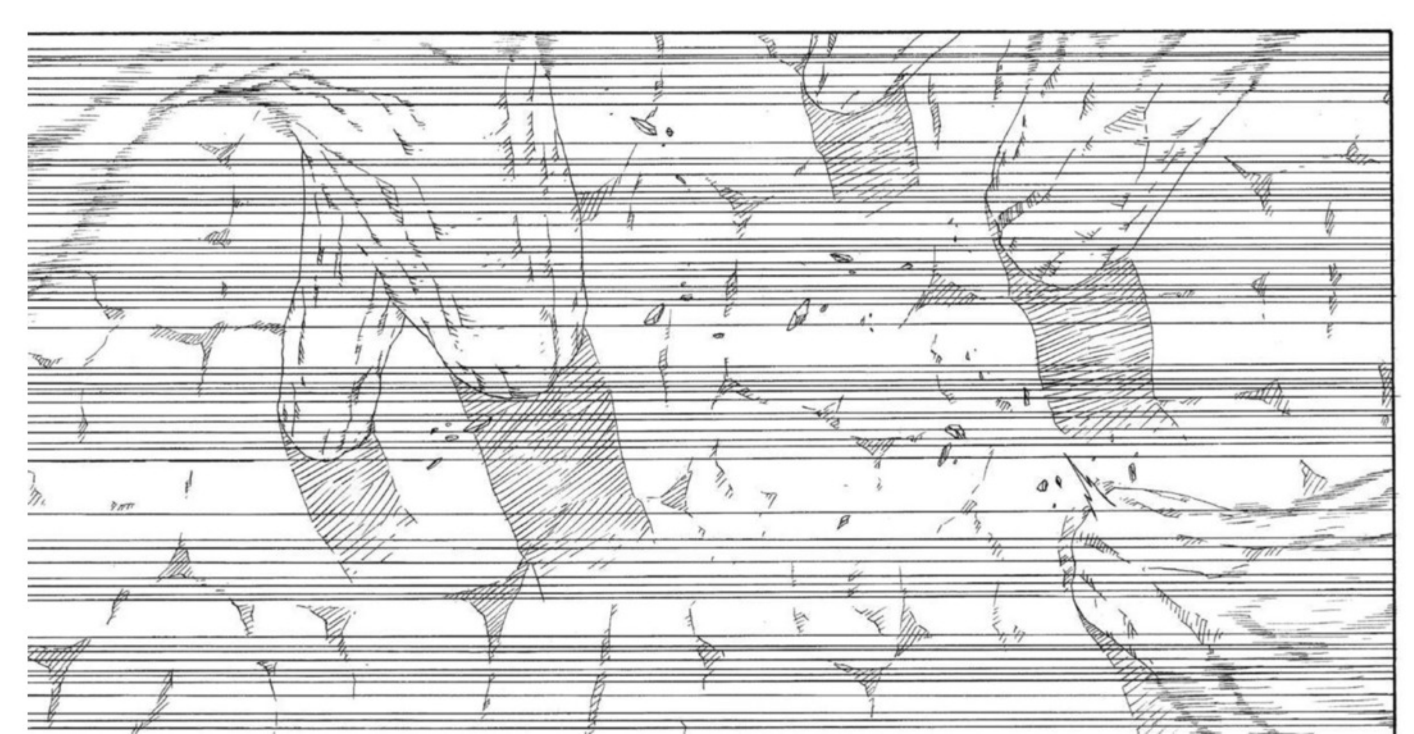






(KANJI: SCORPION)



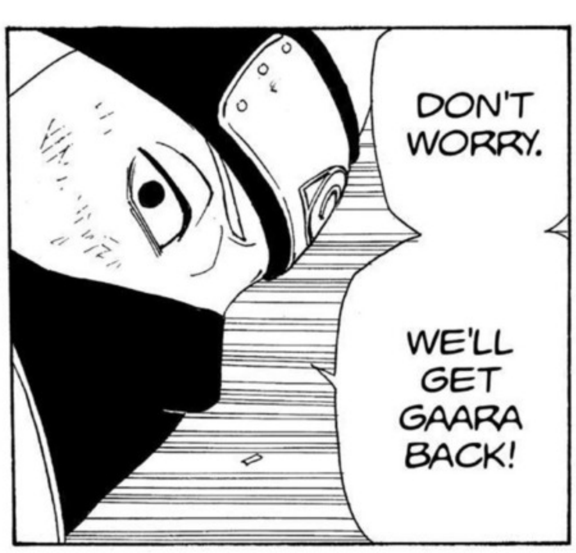


I SAID WAIT, DIDN'T I?!

GLOM

!!













READ THIS WAY



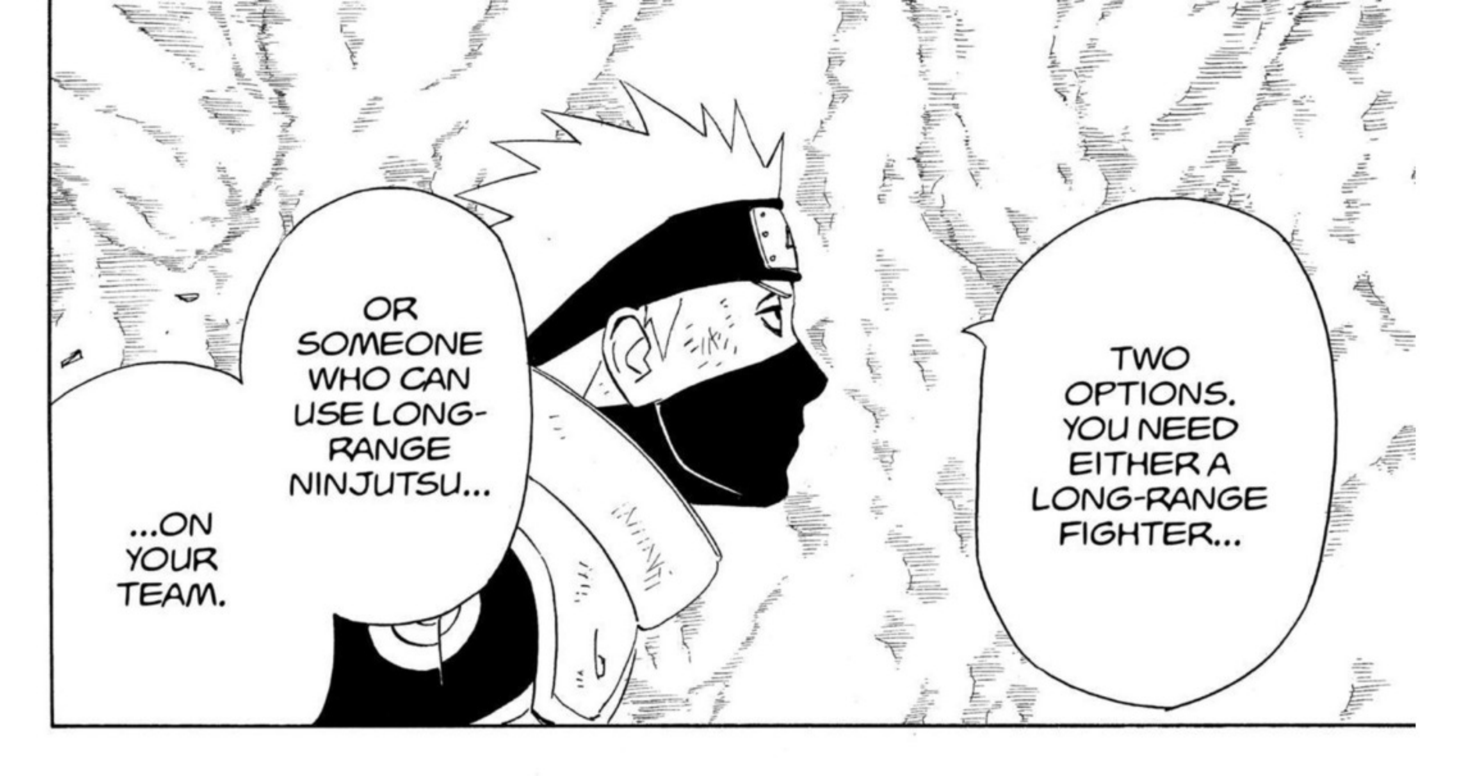











TWO OPTIONS. YOU NEED EITHER A LONG-RANGE FIGHTER...
OR SOMEONE WHO CAN USE LONG-RANGE NINJUTSU...
...ON YOUR TEAM.

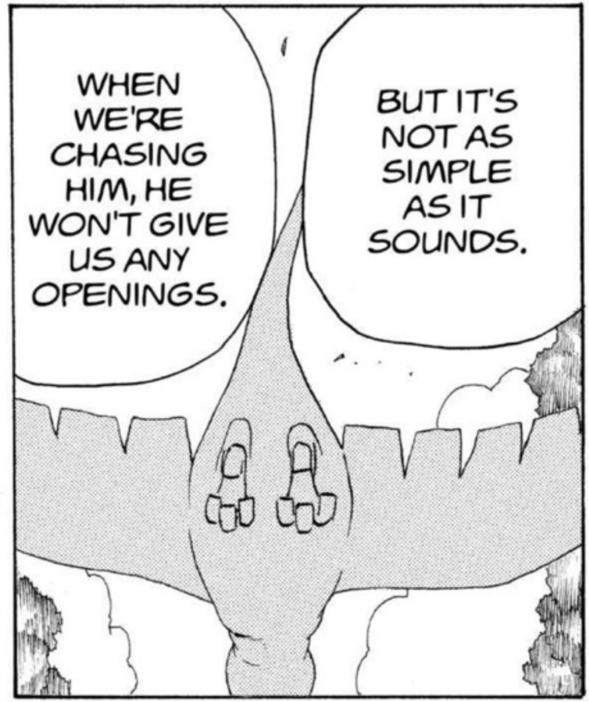

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE OR THE OTHER...
THERE'S NO WAY YOU'LL BEAT HIM.
NOW, IF YOU HAD THE SUPERIOR INTELLECT OF SHIKAMARU, THAT WOULD BE A DIFFERENT STORY.

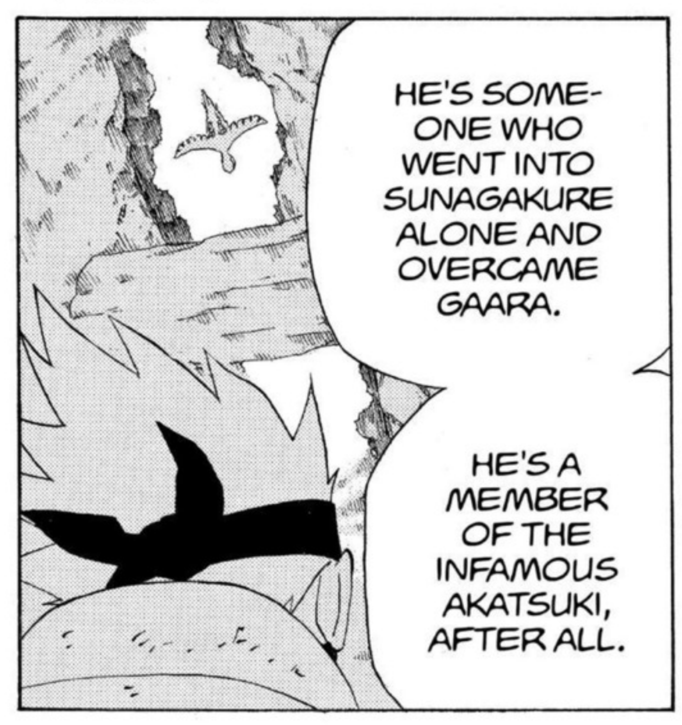

SPELL IT OUT, WILL YOU?!
WHICH ARE YOU, MASTER KAKASHI?


AH... ME.
I *HAVE* A SUPERIOR INTELLECT.
I'M A JŌNIN. AND I CAN SUSTAIN A LONG-RANGE BATTLE.


THEN WE MEET THE CONDITIONS!
THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU TO CALM DOWN.


READ THIS WAY


BUT IT'S NOT AS SIMPLE AS IT SOUNDS.
WHEN WE'RE CHASING HIM, HE WON'T GIVE US ANY OPENINGS.


HE'S SOMEONE WHO WENT INTO SUNAGAKURE ALONE AND OVERCAME GAARA.
HE'S A MEMBER OF THE INFAMOUS AKATSUKI, AFTER ALL.


SO WHAT DO WE DO?
WE MUST CREATE AN OPENING OURSELVES.


YOU AND I, TOGETHER.
...


...


IF YOU'RE WITH ME SO FAR, THEN STAY CLOSE.
I HAVE A PLAN.


SHWOOF
PFOOM
PFOOF
ZOOM



PFOF

SHFF

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

PFOF

CRACKK

SIZZLE

NOT GOING TO ATTACK ME?

BLURB

ONE MINUTE LEFT.

HRRRR




!!
SNIKT
PLIP
THOK
PLIP
!



TO BE CONTINUED IN *NARUTO* VOL. 31!